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THE MEASURE OF A MAN

By Francis Prevost

Author of "The Plague of the Heart"

CHAPTER I.

THE light shore breeze of a September morning was dying out across the bay. The wide Atlantic beyond it seemed flat as a floor of sapphire inlaid with pale veins of green. The sky was without a cloud; and the sun filled the unstirred silence with a clear golden heat.

The high-gray cliffs that held the bay hid, at either end, the land beyond it; half hid, even, by a curve of their contour, the entrance to Ballindra River, so that no sign of habitation was to be seen along the shore.

The blue spaces of the sea were empty, save for a little lug-rigged boat which had slipped out of the river while the mists still slept upon it, and had spent the morning creeping with each soft breath of air to the northern border of the bay.

It was now close to land, so close that the objects of its journey could be plainly seen.

Before it, cradled, under the cliffs, between the serried ledges of rock, was a tiny beach.

It was in shape like a young moon, paved in silvery pink and pearl by milk-white pebbles and delicate shells, with shelving wings of stone thrust out and bent inward from either side into the sea.

The long ledges of rock were of a dark lavender, and from them a brilliant yellow weed dripped and swung in the transparent pool of purple and emerald, which throbbed softly against the pearly crescent of the shore.

East and west, so far as eye could reach, the sea pushed a sparkling shoulder against the sheer front of the cliffs. Nowhere else in the whole bay was there a foot's breadth of beach, and there was clearly no outlet landward even from the slender strand toward which the boat was heading.

A girl with fair hair and luminous gray eyes was steering, and a man of about thirty sat upon the opposite gunwale with the slack sheet in his hand. She looked up at the flapping leech, and then with a whimsical smile into his face.

"You'll have to row in," she said.

"Not I," he protested, airily; "we're going to sail."

She laughed a low contented laugh at his perversity.

"Like this?" she inquired, tilting her head at the empty canvas.

"Give the wind time," he replied, with a glance across the bay and a big indrawn breath of complete satisfaction; "we've the whole day before us."

"We haven't the whole channel, though," she said, nodding to starboard, where a black fin of rock cut suddenly in the clear water a little whispering ring of foam.

"Phew!" exclaimed the man, screwing around on the gunwale as the black fin disappeared. "Many like that?"

"Plenty, plenty!" laughed the girl. "Are you going to row?"

He shook his head. Then, with an effect of having completely forgotten her, stared eagerly across that wavering jewel of water at the rose and silver of the beach, and down through the trans-

parent purple depths beneath him at the sand and the rocks and the waving yellow weed.

She watched his face brighten with their beauty, as though somehow he had absorbed it, and his grave good looks take on a boyish lightness, as his eyes turned from color to color, or followed the sea-fern streaming in the pulse of the tide. Leaning forward with a smile she laid her hand on the cleat in front of her and let the halyard go. The brown sail ran down till the parrel jammed, and Maurice Caragh faced around reproachfully.

"Why don't you want to row?" she cried. "It isn't a hundred yards."

"No, I know," he sighed, as he freed the clip of the traveler and gathered in the bunt; "but a sail looks so much more adventurous."

"Even in a calm?" she smiled.

"Oh, yes, most in a calm," he replied, seating himself disconsolately on the thwart in front of her, and slowly pushing out a sweep. "Adventure's nothing with a full sail, but all the fear of the sea is in the flat one. Look here!" he continued, without change of tone, "the rowlocks are gone."

She thrust out the point of a little white shoe at the place where they lay beneath his thwart, and he pushed them resignedly into their chocks, and pulled for the shore; Lettice Nevern standing up with her finger tips on the tiller behind her, and her eye intent upon the channel.

Her quick emphatic directions amused the man who was rowing, as the boat wound through the invisible maze.

"Goodness!" he exclaimed, backing hard with his left, "I shouldn't care to bring a boat in here with a bit of wind."

"You couldn't," she replied, "with any wind but what we've got. That's what I like about it. There are not ten days in the year you can dare to land here. But this half tide is the worst; it's easier with less or more water."

"Do you ever come here by yourself?" he asked, resting on the oars.

"I've always come by myself," she answered, looking down into his face, "that's why"—she hesitated for a mo-

ment—"that's why I didn't bring you before."

The reason might not have seemed explicit to another, but it carried a sense of privilege to Caragh's mind that troubled the look with which he acknowledged it.

"I hope I mayn't prove unworthy of it," he said, gravely.

"I don't know," she answered, with an absent glance at him; "it's a very dear little beach."

He was willing to admit, when he landed, that it might be anything she pleased to call it, but there was chiefly wonder in his eye. The bands of tiny white and silver pebbles, and of tinier pink shells, made a floor so delicate, so incredibly dainty as seemed, in that land of legend, proof sufficient of a fairy's treading.

The water lay so still and clear against it that only by the brighter tint of the covered pebbles could the margin of the sea be told, and the moving tide that swayed the weed made all along the curved strand a little whispering song, unlike any other music in the world.

Lettice enjoyed Caragh's bewilderment for a moment, but stopped him as he was bringing the cable ashore.

"You must moor her out," she said.

"Oh, no!" he pleaded, "the tide's rising, and she'll look so jolly and so impossible nosing along the shore with all that water under her, on the very edge of an ocean."

But Lettice was inflexible. The tide would be lower she said by the time they started; and Maurice had to shove the boat out again, and succeeded, after a couple of vain attempts, in jerking the anchor off her bow on to a holding bottom.

"Oh, well," he said, cheerfully, eying the result of his labor, while he unpacked the luncheon, "she looks very well out there; only I wish I'd put up the sail."

"Are you quite mad to-day?" the girl asked.

She sat watching him with an air of grave amusement; her feet drawn up and her hands clasped below her knees.

She wore a white serge coat and skirt, with a biscuit-colored silk shirt and a ribbon of the same shade around her sailor hat. She looked much younger than her twenty-three years, though the baby fairness of her hair and skin were sobered by the quiet depths of her gray eyes.

"I'm never mad," said Caragh to her question, holding up the red length of a lobster against the sky, "but sometimes, with you, I'm less distressingly sane than usual."

Lettice, her hands fallen to her ankles, watched him sideways, with one temple resting on her knee.

"That's the reflection of my foolishness, I suppose?" she said.

"Possibly!" he assented; "I'm very highly polished."

He was sitting with his feet toward the sea, unpacking the hamper on to a spread cloth beside him. He viewed the result appreciatively.

"Two bells!" he announced to Lettice. "We're going to do ourselves well."

His prediction, however, only applied to himself, for Lettice ate even less than usual; an amount, he had once declared, absurdly incompatible with her splendid air of health.

She offered him no assistance in clearing up, but he showed a proper sense of his privilege, by refusing even to throw the lobster claws into the sea. Lettice smiled at the chaos of fragments he insisted on repacking.

"Bridget will have ideas of your economy when she opens that," she suggested.

"She'll guess perhaps that we lunched in Paradise," he said.

They walked to the limits of it when he had finished, and sat on the outermost spur of rock.

The ocean was like glass; yet the water pulsed to and fro past them between the long limestone ledges, as it rose and fell with the breath of the sleeping blue breast of the sea.

And the tender sounds of it never ceased. Soft thumps in the blind tunnels beneath them, a crystal kiss that whitened an edge of stone, the whisper

of clear ripples that ran up and tinkled down again, finding no pool to hold them; and, under all, the brushing, backward and forward in the moving water, of the yellow tangle of weed.

Caragh remained but a short time in the seat he had chosen. Rising, he stood at the margin of the sea, shifting his footing now and then, to scan some fresh wonder of color, and with his ears intent on the soft complexity of sound. He seemed entirely to have forgotten his companion's presence, and Lettice watched him with an interest which became annoyed.

"One would think you had never seen such a thing before," she said.

He turned at the sound of her words, but came more slowly to their meaning.

"Oh, one never has seen, or heard, anything before; it's always different," he replied, smiling. "Just listen to that little pool emptying; it runs up a whole octave, but such a queer scale! yet a minute ago I couldn't hear it! And the comic cadence of the water in that gully, it almost makes one laugh. How old Bach would have played with it. But you don't hear?"

"Not a note," she said with tight lips; "but I've no ear."

Caragh caught the tone of grievance. He smiled across at her.

"It's sheer vanity to say that," he tossed back; "but I'll admit if your ears were smaller no one could see them."

He stepped over the intervening ledges, and they picked their way side by side to the beach.

"But it is wonderful," he continued, "that there's a whole world around us that we listen to and look at for years and years, yet never, either hear or see till some strange fortunate moment." He put his hand under her outstretched arm as her balance wavered upon a ridge. "Why, this may be Paradise after all, only we don't notice the angels."

His fingers closed on her elbow as she slipped upon a piece of weed.

"You shouldn't avow it, though you do ignore me," she said, reproachfully.

"Ah," he sighed, as they stepped down upon the strand, "you do no justice to my plural. I wasn't thinking of

the sort of paradise that may be made by one pair of wings. All the same," he went on reflectively, throwing himself upon the beach beside her, "it isn't as an angel that I've ever thought of you."

The tide was almost at its full, and the clear deep water with its thin crystal lip, which opened and shut upon the stones, was only a yard or two from Miss Nevern's feet.

Her little white shoes were thrust out straight before her, heels together, pointing to the sky, and she leaned forward looking over them across the bay.

At Caragh's words she turned her face toward him, with the vague depths of some conjecture in her eyes, as though disposed to ask him how, if not as an angel, he had ever thought of her. But she turned her eyes again, without speaking, to the topaz hills beyond the bay.

Maurice lay a moment looking at her silent profile, then, standing in front of her, he spread out the wide white skirt fan-wise on either side of her feet.

"Now you're perfectly symmetrical," he said, contemplating her from above.

She lifted her eyes to his from the distant hills with a smile.

"It would make a charming thing in marble," he continued; "almost Egyptian and yet so immensely modern. Only some fool of a critic would be certain to ask what it meant."

"And what would you say?"

He gave the statue a moment's further consideration.

"Well, that it wasn't meant for him, anyway," he replied, dropping down again beside her.

"Could you tell him what it meant for you?" she inquired, without moving.

"Not to save my life," he said at once; adding, as if to reassure himself, "but I know."

"You could tell *me*, perhaps?" she suggested, presently.

"Heavens, no!" he exclaimed. "You least of all. You'd think me crazy."

"Oh, I think you that as it is," she admitted, thoughtfully.

He laughed, but with his eyes still oc-

cupied with the beauty of her bent figure.

He filled his left hand absently with the little shells on which he lay, shaking them up and down on his open palm, till only a few were left between his fingers. As he dropped these into the other hand, his eye fell upon them.

"I say! what dear little things!" he exclaimed, enthusiastically. "Why didn't you tell me about them?"

Lettice turned her head.

"I thought you'd seen them," she said, indifferently.

"They're quite incredible," he went on, too absorbed in his discovery to notice her tone; "how is it that, with an ocean falling on them here, they're not ground to gruel? They make me feel more than ever an interloper. You should have moored me out in the boat; this floor was laid for naiads and fays and pixies; for nothing so heavy-footed as a man."

"Or a woman," Lettice suggested, still seated as he had posed her, but watching his search among the pebbles with her chin against her shoulder.

"Cover those number threes!" he said, without looking up from it, picking out the tiniest shells into a little pink heap upon his hand.

"They're not number threes," she retorted; "and they have to carry *me*. You'd find them heavy enough if you were under them."

He glanced up quickly at the half-hidden outline of the face behind her shoulder.

"I dare say," he murmured.

Something in the manner of his agreement brought the color into her cheek, and, perhaps to hide it, she leaned over toward him, and, propped on one elbow, began to search for the little shells and drop them into his hand.

She noticed, as she had never before had opportunity, the suggestion of a fine capacity in the shape of his open hand, and the sharp decision of its rare creases.

"How deep your lines are!" she said.

He looked with inquiry at the darkened features which were bent above

his hand, and in reply she raked with a nail, as pink as and more polished than they, the little pile of shells back toward his thumb.

"Oh, that!" he exclaimed, as she ran the tip of her finger along the furrow. "It's wonderful, isn't it? I never saw a heart line on any hand that filled me with such respect. Cut evidently by one of those obstinately permanent affections that make one gasp in books. Let's look at yours?"

She opened, smiling, on a very rosy palm, a network of slender lines, grated and interlaced.

"Oh, shut it up!" he frowned. "Hide it from your dearest friend. Ah, my simplicity, which thought you so different from all that!"

She laughed, and screwing up her hand looked down into its little cup.

"Well," she said; "tell me what you see in it."

But he shook his head.

"I shut my eyes," he declared, solemnly. "Hold it a little farther off."

"I shan't," she said.

"I mean," he explained, "that a yard away it's everything that one could wish."

She surveyed her hand reflectively. There had been those who wished it a good deal nearer than that; and who had wished in vain.

"At what people call a safe distance, I suppose," she said. "I think you're very fond of safe distances."

He almost started at the touch of scornful provocation in the words and in the tone. A delightful indifference to what he was or wasn't fond of had made hitherto, by its very exclusions, so much possible between them.

"Do you?" he replied, his eyes still upon her bent figure. "Why?"

"You weren't aware of it?" she asked.

"I wasn't. I haven't been told of it before."

"Perhaps, it's only with me?" she suggested.

"Perhaps, it's only with you," he smiled. "How does it show?"

She made, with her slender nail, little moons in the sand.

"It doesn't show," she said, looking down at her finger; "one feels it."

"A general attitude of caution," he suggested playfully; "such as this."

"As what?" she inquired.

"Oh!" he said, with a wave of his hand at the inclosing wall of cliff and the empty vastness of the sea, "this teeming beach, the fashionable resort behind it, the chaperon at our elbow!"

She glanced at him with a shy smile.

"Oh, not in that way," she said; "besides, you couldn't help yourself; you were brought. No, one sees it mostly in the things you say."

"In the things I say?"

"Well, no! perhaps, in the things you don't say."

"I see!" he mused, with the same air of banter, "the desert areas of omission! Others made them blossom for you like the rose? I don't succeed in even expressing things that were commonplace with them?"

"What sort of things?" she asked, her eyes again upon the sand.

"Oh, you know them, probably, better than I," he said; "being a woman, and used to them."

"To what?"

"To the ordinary masculine fatuities of admiration, for instance."

"No," she said, reflectively; "you don't succeed in expressing those. Do you try?"

"Not much, I'm afraid. They offend me."

"*You!*" she exclaimed, surprised into facing him with lifted brows. "You might have said they would offend a woman."

"I might have, years and years ago!" he replied; "but that passed with other elevating superstitions of one's youth. Since then I've observed an unpleasant variety in admirations, but have yet to meet the offended woman. No, a woman may call you a fool for your flummery, or even think you one; but she'll give you every opening to repeat the folly."

The surprise in Lettice Nevern's eyes grew more serious.

"You think a man should never tell

a woman that he admires her?" she said.

"He needn't appraise her to her face like a fat ox in a show pen! unless—oh, well, unless, I suppose, she likes it."

"And then?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, then, one might say, she's qualified for the show pen. Let him tie on the ticket."

A stain of duller red upon the girl's cheek would have betrayed some quickening of her thought, had he been looking at her, instead of out across the purple level of the sea, where, above Ballindra, the harbor hills were turning in the slanting sunlight from topaz to amethyst.

The smile of humorous toleration with which Maurice Caragh accepted half the perplexities of life had always seemed to her so completely to reveal his mind—like the pool before them, through which the light filtered to the very floor—that this dark humor of depreciation let out the sounding line through her fingers into unanchorable depths.

"I think you're a little hard," she said slowly; "women aren't vain, as a rule; at least not like that. It's their humility that makes them care so much to be admired."

"I see," he smiled. "But I don't object to the admiration; that's inevitable; only to the way it's paid."

"But how is a woman to know if you don't tell her?"

"Do you ask?" he said.

"I?" she questioned. "Why?"

"I thought the last fortnight would have taught you that," he said, quietly.

Her eyes flashed upon him ere she could prevent them, and from the flash her cheeks took color as though they faced a flame.

But she was playing with the shells in her hand again before he noticed that she had moved her head, but the tip of her forefinger trembled as she pushed the tiny pink heap across her palm.

"Taught me what?" she murmured.

"What I couldn't say," he replied, adding determinedly, as she would not help him, "how much I admired you."

She turned her face halfway toward him with a little pathetic, distrustful smile.

"Couldn't you see it?" he said.

Her under lip quivered as her mouth moved to answer him; then, as though afraid to trust the simplest word to it, she shook her head.

Caragh saw the quiver, and every fiber in him seemed resonant with that vibration; seemed to ring with pity and tenderness and shame, as a bell reverberates to a mere thread of sound.

The thing was happening which had never happened to him before; with which, in a varied adventure with women, he had never had to charge his soul; for, until to-day, he had not stolen wittingly a girl's love.

"I thought it was plain enough," he went on warily; "I couldn't have given my eyes much more to say."

"Oh, your eyes!" came her depreciation.

He waited a second.

"Well, you see," he temporized, "I'm shy, and I didn't know how else to say it, but I hoped you'd understand."

He let the vague uncommittting words slip slowly from him, as a man pays out a cable which he cannot make fast, with rocks astern of him, and the last fathom at any moment in his fingers. Would she come to his help, he wondered, with a laugh or a light word, or must he go on to the inevitable end?

Lettice said nothing; her glance, lifted from her hand, looked away past him absently across the bay. But in its aversion he read that she understood—more even than he asked; understood that a man may be craven enough to let his eyes do what his lips dare not. She was not coming to his help; but he might, so her silence said, jump overboard and save himself, and let her and his honor go together upon the rocks.

"Well!" he went on in lighter tones, as though to suggest their adoption, "I'm afraid my mute eloquence was wasted. Must I stoop to speech?"

The girl's eyes still gazed dreamily across the water.

"What for?" she said.

She might, as many a woman would,

have left his hesitation no alternative; have given with some touch of tenderness, of reluctance, even of acerbity, that hint of the expected from which, for his honor, there could be no appeal. But she chose not to. Perhaps it was her diffidence that decided, perhaps her pride.

Any way she left to him the freedom of his embarrassment, such as it was.

He must extricate himself, but he himself should choose how. It was clear that he had not chosen when he spoke again.

"You see," he said, with the same airy extenuation, "I'm such a bad talker that I leave as little as possible to my tongue. It is so often, to my thought, like the nervous listener who insists on supplying the last word to a sentence; the wrong word, but the word one has, out of good manners, to use."

She was looking at him now, but with no meaning in her eyes.

"That's why," he continued, "I couldn't trust it to say how . . . how grateful I was for you."

"For me?" she questioned.

"You see I can't trust it yet," he pleaded, ruefully. "Yes, for you; for everything about you that's so delightful and unlooked for; the charm—"

At that her eyes stopped him. He had looked up suddenly as though he felt the blaze of them hot upon his face.

"Am I in the show pen?" she said, quietly.

That settled it, he felt. Well, she had every right to her challenge; he had put it into her mouth.

It was characteristic, curiously enough, of his fortuitous nature, that, despite the unedifying fashion in which his intention had hitherto hung and veered—nosing, as it were, the wind of opportunity for a flaw that suited it—he put his helm over now with irrevocable decision.

"You've cause to ask that," he said, with a smile, "since I left out the only reason that seems to make admiration speakable."

"Yes?" she asked, simply. "What is it?"

He raised himself from his elbow, on

to his wrist, with one knee beneath him, straightening himself with respectful homage to the occasion.

"Adoration!" he replied. "No man's eulogies can be an insult to the woman he adores."

Her eyes, brave enough before, would not meet that, and he saw the vain attempt to steady the rebellious tenderness of her lips. Their tremor touched him as it had before; his voice lost its little air of drama and dropped into the boyish plainness which so well became it.

"Please," he explained, "I should have said that first; only I didn't, because I thought you knew it. I'm not silly enough to suppose it matters whether I adore you or not, except just as an apology, the only apology for what I oughtn't to have said."

She was looking down deliberately at the hand on which she leaned, and even her lips were hid from him. He bent toward her and put his hand over hers upon the sand.

"Dear," he said, humbly, "it seems so idle to say I love you, that I only dare to say it—as an excuse. Will you let it stand at that, and forgive me just because of it? You needn't tell me that I have no claim, and never had the least encouragement to speak of such a thing. I know that. It's inconsiderate and presumptuous, and there's only me to blame. But some day, perhaps, you won't mind remembering that I worshiped you, and try to be a little sorry for me after all."

But what she tried, not over successfully, was to say his name. Yet her lips proclaimed it with such a tremulous appropriation as to answer all his other questions.

CHAPTER II.

Maurice had never known an hour so disordered as that which followed his declaration. His mind was like a locomotive factory trying at a moment's notice to make balloons. It was a scene of astounding and fantastic compromises.

The attitude for the occasion appeared to be a clear high joyousness tinged with the overwhelming sense of an unlooked-for favor.

Something approaching that in appearance he did certainly achieve; enough to make for the girl the moment of its immense significance; to give it the acclamation, the splendor of crowning circumstance.

His gladness, like the color of a flag that suddenly dyes the air with victory, brought the strangest, the most assuring tumult to her heart. She heard it, as the beleaguered hear the guns that end their siege, too faint, too happy, too amazed to answer.

He heard it with amazement too; heard in his own mouth the note of triumph, of a triumph which seemed to put an end to all his hopes, to mock with its thin pretense the lost promise of such a moment, the passionate exultation which it might have yielded him.

Yet he heard it; that was something; and, though he hardly knew what he was saying, he could read its radiant answer upon the girl's face. If he was missing the full measure of the hour—and that was to put his misfortune meagerly—she at least had not suspected it. He had that single satisfaction—but, to his schooling, a supreme one—the reflection, as he voiced it to his trouble, that he was "playing the game."

He was inspired to suggest tea. They had brought it with them, and, though it might have seemed a higher compliment to forget both that and the hour, it was one that Maurice had not the pluck to pay. He still felt to be an intruder to the occasion, to be sustaining what some one else had achieved. The sense of duplicity made him clumsy as a man under a load; he could not use with a lover's audacity the exquisite immaturity of the moment. The very kisses which her eyes expected left a traitor's taste upon his lips.

Action, though it was but tea-making, gave him breathing space; it dismissed, for a while at least, the most protesting part of him from a service into which so breathlessly it had been pressed.

With a kettle in his hand, and under shelter of the hamper, his irresponsible buoyancy came back to him, his humorous appreciation of circumstance even when it told so heavily against himself; and his talk across the table he was spreading was only a shade too vivid to be a lover's. Its gay note was thrown up by the girl's silence; a silence lightened only by a happy nod or smile. She seemed to wish, sitting intently there, to feel her senses afloat on the invading flood of his devotion, as a boat is floated by the incoming tide.

It was for that she sat so still, unwilling by any impulse of her own, to dilute her consciousness of this strange strong thing, which crept to her very skin and carried her away, surgingly intimate as the living sea.

Maurice had set her silence down to shyness, till something in the soft rapture of her face told him its true meaning. The pathos of that and, for him, the shame of it, hurt him as an air too rare to breathe.

The thought of this woman measuring with grateful wonderment the magnitude of a thing which had no existence, but in which he had brought her to believe, wrung him with a keen distress.

And in that sharp moment of shame and pity he came very near loving her; came near enough, at any rate, to dedicate the future to her illusion.

As he knelt before her on the sand, offering her a teacup in both his hands as though it were some sacrifice to an idol, he realized, by the glance which accepted both the humor and the service, what a big thing he had in hand. It was big enough even, so he found before long, to hide his own immense disappointment, which shrank into a small affair beside that which she must never be allowed to feel.

He had received his discomfiture from a false trust in Fate, but hers would come from a false trust in him.

So Maurice reflected as he watched Miss Nevern trying to persuade herself that cake on such an occasion was as easy to consume as cake on any other. In that, however, despite an excellent

intention, she did not succeed; and her failure, absurd as it might sound, lit in him a pride of responsibility which her "I love you" had not. Here, at any rate, was an unequivocal effect; beyond evasion he was chargeable with this; and no priestly sacrament could have so pledged his allegiance as that little dryness of her throat. She set down her half-emptied cup with the prettiest pretense of satiety, a pretense which Caragh, with the hot thirst of a wound upon him, and having already drained the teapot, felt it best became him to ignore.

The wind, which had died at midday, freshened in the shadows of the September evening, and ruffled the flat face of the water into one rich dark hue.

Along the northern shore of the bay the shade of the bluff had fallen, and made a leaden edging to the sea.

Southward the low sun blazed, a dull rose red, against the scarp of cliff, and turned the farther waters and the dim headlands beyond them to a wine-dipped purple.

"It's as solemnly gorgeous as you could well have it," Maurice affirmed as he hauled in the boat, "and we're going out of this spiny harbor under all sail to show we take the display in a proper spirit."

There was something so boyishly absurd in his determination that Lettice, too numb with happiness to be determined about anything, went with a sigh of abdication into the bow, and leaning over the stem-post, with her fingers through the lower cringle in the luff, called the course with the quick decision of a river pilot.

But for one long strident scrape—during which each held a breath—against a sunken ledge which the helmsman found her too closehauled to clear, they came valorously into the open sea, and Maurice, sitting over the gunwale to windward with the sheet in his hand, brought Lettice aft to steer.

He had the position of vantage, for she sat a foot beneath him, and, unlike hers, his eyes owed no attention to the sail.

She begged him not to look at her;

but, feeling that observation was to her advantage, he only complied for a moment with her request.

Observation was to his advantage, too; for if, with shut eyes, it was easier to remember what he had lost in his new possession, with them open it was impossible to forget what he had gained.

Only a dull man would have called Lettice Nevern beautiful, but the dullest could not have thought her plain.

She had, in its most dainty shape, that perfect imperfection known as prettiness. Distinctly pretty, most women called her; and men who were not thought easy of distraction had justified the label. She had a figure a sculptor would have prized, full, buoyant, flexible, with the grace of splendid health in every line. It was a consolation, Maurice reflected, to be able to admire an acquisition, even though one did not desire it. She had, too, an admirable temper, an eye for what became her, a dozen interests in the open air. That made for mutual accommodation, and he could imagine nothing in her which could lessen his respect.

His ignorance of women was based on too wide an acquaintance to be neglected, yet he felt sure that Lettice was no coquette.

And despite the gayety with which her face was so charmingly inscribed, she could endure quietness—enjoy it even, as four summers at Ballindra proved.

On the whole, he felt cause to thank Providence, as a man might, able to nurse his damaged limbs after an accident, that the catastrophe was, for him, no worse.

He was beginning to wonder what it might be for her.

They raced home under more canvas than one who knew the shore winds of Ballindra would have cared to carry; but neither, for diverse reasons, was inclined to prudence, and the wake they blazed across that blue-black surface was a joy to see.

Caragh's right hand went to and fro, as though it held a bolting horse, and the sheet wore a deep red furrow about his palm.

Lettice kept her eyes on her work, for, as they felt the tide race, it took some little coaxing through the stiffer gusts to hold the boat's nose on the Head in front of them.

The wind that swept the sea was channeled by the contour of the cliffs into blustering draughts that streamed from the deep-cut coombes, with spaces almost of calm between them. Slantwise across these lay their course, and as the boat leaped, like a hurt thing, at each fresh blow, Maurice could feel the quick restraint of the girl's guiding fingers.

As his arm gave with the gust, the pressure of hers upon the tiller seemed to answer it, and that sensation of swift divination and subtle responsiveness between his hand and hers was worth the risk of an upset, and Maurice only wished it were less impossible to discover if Miss Nevern shared it. He supposed not. Women, so time had taught him, were seldom sensitive to the unexpected.

As they cleared the Head, and the mystery of the river lay in the dark hills before them, Caragh came again to his senses.

"Down helm!" he said.

She woke out of her reverie, but with her hand hard over.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"Shorten sail," he said, letting go the halyards.

"You're very cautious," she flouted.

"It's the timidity of sudden happiness," he smiled, making fast the first reef cringle to the boom; "you've given me too much to lose."

She touched for an instant the hand which clipped the leech beside her, and the print of her warm fingers came like an oath for sanctity, turning to truth what had had for his own ear but a jesting bitterness: she *had* given him too much to lose.

"Well!" he laughed, when they were going again, as the full draught of the river laid them over, and, ahead, the orange lights of Ballindra gleamed in the cleft purple of the land. "would you like that tuck out of her skirts?"

She set her lips, as they shaved the outmost ledges of the southern shore, and came about in the banging wind.

"You ought to row," she said, smiling.

"Not a doubt of it," he admitted, blandly; "you've only to say the word."

But she did not. Though the harbor was not full, there were riding lights enough upon the water to make, in that dusk, the threading of their way exciting, even without the tide under them, which hummed and jumped against the quivering anchor chains. But she was proud of her seamanship, and of her knowledge of the river, and conscious that the man who watched her could appreciate the skill in every turn of her wrist, and the pluck which kept it steady as they grazed the great black shapes of ships, or spun about as a straining cable snapped up at them out of the dark water.

Tim Moran, the old boatman who put them ashore, had a melancholy head-shake at her rashness.

"Bedad, sor, it's not meself that larned her to be so vinturesome!" he explained apologetically to Caragh as he pocketed an unlooked-for piece of silver at the slip.

"She's a willful little thing, I'm afraid," Maurice murmured, slipping his arm in hers, as they went up into the obscurity of the shore, "and rather given to running risks in the dark."

She gave him her face for answer; and the kiss he put upon it was her seal of safety in the darkest risk that she had run.

CHAPTER III.

It was that risk, a risk of which she guessed so little, which overshadowed the three days which had been added to Caragh's sojourn at Ballindra, and which settled, black and heavy, on his reflections when she waved him a farewell.

Lettice had driven him the bleak ten miles to the dreary little station which lay like a great gray stone upon the stony fields, and he had resigned himself to eight hours of Irish travel and

his thoughts, doubting of which he would be the rather rid.

The announcement of a man's affection for a woman is regarded, to-day at least, dynamically. It is supposed to put things in motion; and it is left, very reasonably, for the man to explain what.

Maurice recognized the obligation; but he asked a breathing space in which to adjust the machinery. There was a good deal to be arranged, he said. There was considerably more than could be told a bride. His affairs, he explained, entangled by the provisions of his father's will, were beginning to adjust themselves. But his income for the present was provisional, and till certain securities had been realized and charges paid—things which could not be hurried—he would hardly know how he stood, not definitely enough, at any rate, to speak of settlements.

Lettice made a mouth at that.

"I know," he said, as he softened its displeasure, "but there's your brother!" —he was her guardian and the sole trustee of her small possessions. "I can take a shot at his first question."

"Oh, so can I," she sighed. "But when will you be able to answer it?"

"Say in six months," he suggested. "Can you have all that patience?"

She nodded, and so, quite honestly, Caragh obtained his respite; though the arrangements for which he needed it were not entirely financial.

It was, curiously enough, the very honesty of the transaction which troubled his Celtic mind as he traveled eastward.

Since he had to hide from her the real necessity for postponement, he would have preferred to hide it behind the responsible audacity of a lie; behind something for which he could feel manfully and contritely accountable.

Deception was least endurable which did not compromise the deceiver. He hated the hedging truth.

He hated more things that morning than he often took the trouble even to think about, and they were mostly phases of himself. He was conscious,

too, as the train rolled across the weary strapwork of stone-walled fields, of a new sensation. He felt to have left a part of himself in Ballindra, fastened there securely, yet tied to him still by a thread that seemed drawn out of him, as the weaving filament from a spider's body, which, far or fast as he might travel, he could not break. It would hold him and bring him back.

The part which he had left there was the pledge he had given, the word of his honor; a word which had been a lie at best; yet no true oath that he had ever sworn had seemed to have half its sanctity. It was her belief that made it sacred and more binding than the truth.

The proud way she wore this mock jewel, as though it were a priceless stone, shut forever the giver's lips upon its value.

If he had once loved her he might have faced her without disgrace in the day his love had died, but there was no grace left him now but his deception. That, henceforth, was to be the high thing, the stimulating fineness of his life; and, curiously enough, it woke in him a determination, manful and tender, which no real passion of the past had been able to arouse.

It woke, too, though from less tranquil slumbers, the remembrance of his mutations, the grieved conviction of instability. He, least of all men, should furnish a socket for the lamp of constancy. Of what impression, he asked himself mournfully, had he ever kept the print? It was odious, contemptible. He was sick of his inconstancy; it took the exalting seriousness from life.

But though for his fickleness he blamed no one but himself, he realized that it had been aided by his somewhat unfortunate predilections. None of the women whose fascination he had acknowledged could be considered an inspiration to stability. The very color of their charm had a chameleon quality, and his appreciation was, too often, for its suspective changes.

Yet, had he met, so at least he told himself, some sober-faced demand upon his constancy, he believed that, in con-

duct at any rate, he could have sustained it.

Well, the demand had now been made, and if he had not faced it with any furious gratitude, there was in him a humble determination to realize for one woman at least her conception of a man. That resolve had stiffened him into something approaching a romantic attitude on that fairy beach in the first shock of his unlooked-for conquest, and it sustained him now, more or less, while during the slow, dull journey he reflected soberly as a conqueror on the administration of his new possession.

There was a good deal to be thought of; a good deal about him that would have to go. Economies to be effected, not in expenditure only—that was a small matter—but in life. And in life it had pleased him hitherto to be just a little extravagant. He had wasted it generously, for others as heedlessly as for himself. He had done nothing, as he was so often, so importantly reminded; but then, in a happier sense, he had done everything.

Done it with a simplicity, a gayety, a frugality even; since, after all, it was the evanescent, the immaterial things he cared for; the goods that are never marked in plain figures and only paid for in life.

Well, there would be an end to that sort of payment, save such as went into his wife's pocket. She seemed, poor, pretty thing, to swell and spread, ogreishly, between him and—if he must confess it—his most alluring interests.

Her warding arms shut out the enchantment of all the charming women in the world.

Truly, he reflected, in the matter of a woman's value, the man who, with an income just sufficient for himself, sought her hand in marriage, must seem the most determined optimist under the sun.

Yet he felt anything but an optimist when the darkness of the night gave place to white clouds of steam above the rocking, oily blackness of harbor water, and he dragged himself stiff and tired from his ill-lit carriage into the blanching glare of Kingston jetty.

CHAPTER IV.

Caragh found at his rooms, when he arrived in London, in the forefront of his correspondence, a letter and a telegram.

Both were from Lady Ethel Vernon, and had an appositeness with which their recipient could very readily have dispensed.

They had been propped against a photograph of the sender, a coincidence not remarkable considering the number of her likenesses which the room held.

These agreed in the presentment of a woman, dark and slight, with a finely carried head, deep eyes that might be passionate, and a mouth that knew something of disdain.

Caragh took up one of the portraits when he had read his letter, looked at it a long while without expression, and set it down again. The letter, which bore a foreign postmark and was some days old, spoke of the writer's probable departure with her husband for Budapest, where the latter, who had been an under-secretary, wished to study some question of religious politics which was to come before the House of Deputies.

It groaned at such a season, and suggested, if a hint so imperious could be called suggestion, that Maurice Caragh's presence might be required in the Hungarian capital. The telegram merely added that it was.

Caragh picked up an English Bradshaw, and after turning its pages absently for five minutes in search of continental routes, realized the inadequacy of the volume, took up his hat, and went out.

Piccadilly dozed in the September sun, with a strange air of tired quietness, inert and listless as a weary being.

A stale warm haze of sunlight filled the air, silent, unstirred, that made a misty thickness in the plumage of the trees, while from some by-street were blown pale vapors with the smoky reek of bitumen, which told of autumn's leisurely repairs.

The dust on the roadway rose about

the spray of a water cart, and beyond it rumbled a solitary bus. On the park stand waited, driverless, a worn four-wheeler, its horse asleep; and, here and there along the forsaken pavement, desultory figures, which the season never saw there, came and went.

Caragh, on the doorstep of his club, inhaled gratefully the dormant air, which sank like an opiate into the senses. How happy if those for whose pleasure this highway rang worn and sleepless, during the hours of June, could only imitate in their recessions the soothing passiveness of its repose.

But the reflection led him to the banks of the Danube, and so, by the Orient express, indoors. There he lunched, looked out his train, worked through his letters, and went out into the dozing afternoon.

If he had ever been before in London during its first September days he felt he had been there to no purpose. He had missed it all. The silence, the sense of space, the strange, exhausted air, the curious people moving aimlessly about, like the queer creatures that sometimes take possession of a deserted warren.

He strolled vaguely through the deserted streets, out of which suddenly the inhabitants had sunk as water through a sieve. A housemaid's laughing challenge from a doorway to the grocer's boy rang around an empty square. A lean cat went slowly along the pavement, yet one could hear the fall of her pads. Everywhere blinds were drawn behind the windows. The place was in mourning for a people that died annually, like seedling flowers.

Caragh drifted from street to street, amused, philosophic, in that oblivion to his own before and after of which he was so profusely capable.

When he was tired he returned to the club. Then he remembered; and, after deciding regretfully against the adequateness of a telegram, wrote four pages of penitent affection, which he hoped might read more exhilarating in Ballindra than he could pretend to find them.

With their execution his consciousness quickened, and he spent a melan-

choly evening at the play. Two days later he was in Vienna.

CHAPTER V.

"Here!" cried Harry Vernon, tossing his wife a telegram he had just opened, "this is meant for you. Caragh's coming on from Komárom by raft."

"By raft?" exclaimed the lady as she caught the envelope. "What's that?"

"One of those crawling timber things you see going by," replied Vernon, gazing meditatively across the river; "it's rather the sort of thing one imagines Caragh would do; invests him with the charm of the unexpected."

His wife was frowning as she read the message.

"What does he mean by such a piece of fooling," she said, petulantly, "when he knows I'm here alone!"

"Never having been married, he probably thinks there's me," suggested her husband, blandly.

"Well, there's you and about twenty ill-dressed Germans who can't even speak their own language, or no one; mostly no one. It's not amusing in a place like this. When will he be here?"

Harry Vernon put his finger on the bell. "We'll find out," he said.

But they did not. The combined intelligence of the hotel was unequal to coping with the ways of a timber raft; it made obliging guesses, tranquilly ridiculous, as a concession to good manners, which, with easy indifference to distance, endowed Caragh's new mode of motion with any rate of progress between that of a perambulator and of an express train.

Ethel Vernon bit her lip as her husband drew out, with huge relish, in his profuse execrable German, the ambiguous ignorance of the hotel staff.

"Well," he laughed, as the last witness withdrew, "it seems you may expect Caragh any moment from lunch time until this day month. If only these good people had named an hour at which he couldn't possibly turn up we should have known when to look for him."

"He may come when he pleases," said his wife, indifferently.

"It's a way he has," remarked the other, smiling.

Lady Ethel determined before his arrival to see everything in the city which Caragh might wish to show her.

The effort would bore her considerably, but she hoped for some compensation from his chagrin. The city was, however, for the following days, almost obliterated by pelting rain.

But even that brought a measure of consolation. Ethel sat at her window, and watched the green river grow turbid and swollen under the streaming skies.

"I hope he likes his raft," she murmured, grimly.

But it was her husband who on that aspiration had the first news. He had paid a visit to Vácz, and meant to return by water. On the pier he found Caragh, whose curiosity in raft travel was satisfied, and who yearned for dry clothes. They traveled by the same boat, and Maurice explained that his adventure dated back many years in design, which a chance meeting with a timber merchant at Györ enabled him to execute. He gave an account of the men, their hardihood, humor, and riparian morality.

"I see," said Vernon, amused and interested. "Pity it's not the sort of thing that appeals to a woman!"

Caragh looked at him doubtfully.

"I suppose it's not," he said.

"I mean as a reason for having kept her waiting," Vernon continued.

"Must think of something else," soiloquized the other, dolefully.

Vernon laughed.

"There's always that happy alternative for a Celt. Oh, by the way," he cried, with sudden remembrance, "how's the lady?"

"Which lady?" Caragh inquired.

"The lady you're going to marry in that green isle of yours. We heard of her from Miss Persse, who'd been staying over there, at Bally—something or other."

"Miss Nevern?" Caragh suggested absently, looking across the river; he was not a man very easy to surprise.

"That's the name!" said Vernon. "When does it come off?"

"I'm afraid you'll have to ask Miss Persse," replied the other, slowly; "I'm not in her confidence."

"Well, I'm sorry," the politician said. "I hoped you were going to settle down and lead an honest life."

"I've kept out of prison—and Parliament, so far," replied Caragh, thoughtfully.

"Your things turned up all right, and I took a room for them," Vernon explained, as they landed at the Ferencz Jozsef Quay and went up to the hotel. "The place is so full over this religious Bill that it's hard to get in anywhere."

He went up with Caragh to see if the right room had been reserved.

"We're dining down below at seven; everything's early here. Kapitány is coming, the leader of the opposition in the Magnates."

Caragh got out of his wet things in which he had lived during the two days of rain, took a bath, and dressed. There were still two hours to dinner, and he debated for a moment if he should go in search of Ethel Vernon. Something in his remembrance of her husband's smile, however, seemed to deprecate hurry, and he was aware that the man who knew not how to wait came only to the things he had not wanted.

As he doubted what to do, he remembered vividly where he was. While he loitered, under an apricot twilight the Váci-utca was becoming silvered with its thousand lamps.

At that hour the brilliant, merry little street would be filling, between its walls of blazing windows, across the breadth of its asphalt road, with a stream of men and women; men of fine carriage and women with splendid eyes; laughing, chattering, flaunting, flirting, strolling idly to and fro.

He would sit there again, as he had sat so often, to sip his coffee and watch the crowd.

On his way a postman, running into him, gave a fresh jolt to his memory.

There would be a letter awaiting him from Lettice! He paused a moment,

mentally to locate the post office, and to taste the curious sedate pleasure the anticipation brought. It was the first letter he had received from her, and the first of such a kind that had ever come to him from any woman. He found it in the big busy building behind the Laktanya, and, slipping it into his pocket, turned back to the gay Váci-utcza, already filled with a piercing ineffual whiteness under the clear rose and amethyst of the evening sky.

There, with a green tumbler before him, in a *kávčasz* much patronized of the garrison, he sat and read his letter, looking out absently between its sentences at the lighted faces in the street.

It was a shy, sweet, formal little note, not lavish of endearment, less so even than her lips had been, and with something evasive and unaccustomed about it which touched Caragh, like the shrinking of a child's hand from an unfamiliar texture.

He had completely forgotten her existence half an hour earlier, yet he was surprised to find how tenderly he thought of her, when he thought of her at all. Women, before now, had often filled his thoughts to an aching tension; he had read their letters with a leaping pulse; but he had felt for none of them as he did for this frank girl, who escaped so easily from his remembrance and had never warmed his blood.

He bought a basket of saffron roses on his way back and sent it up to Ethel Vernon. She was sitting at table when he came down to dinner, talking volubly across it to a ruddy white-haired old gentleman with a soldier's face and shoulders. She greeted him with charming animation, introduced him to Kapitány, mentioned his adventure, and wove his tongue at once into their talk. Fine manners and the tact of entertainment were traditions in her family since there had been an earldom of Dalguise, and the famous Hungarian, noting the adroitness with which she piloted Caragh's ethical opinions into the traffic of politics, thought her a very clever woman, and him a very fortunate young man.

With his own good fortune Caragh

was less impressed. He had not expected that his roses would be worn, but he wished that a frock had not been selected which seemed so much to miss them.

He knew Ethel Vernon well enough to make out the meaning of her primrose and heliotrope, and she, alas! knew him well enough to be certain that he could not miss it. The delicacy of his perception had supplied her before with forms of punishment, which she used on him the more deliberately since no one else of her acquaintance was hurt by them at all. Her courtesy, which so appealed to Kapitány, seemed to Caragh like a frozen forceps feeling for his nerves. They were both of them beyond the use of courtesies, which may lead back along the road of friendship as far, and faster, than they have led forward. Her affability seemed that night to thrust Caragh back to the days spent in fascinated speculation on the advice in Ethel Vernon's eyes. He had taken it, or supposed he had taken it, in the end, and for nearly three years now she had stood for everything of woman's interest and adjustment in his life. That, for him, was a considerable stretch of constancy, for which however he took no credit. It was due, as he had once suggested, to her bewildering inconstancy to herself, which produced in her captive a sense of attachment to half a dozen women.

Her inconstancy in those three years had not, it was true, been confined altogether to herself. She had forsaken her own high places more than once or twice to follow strange gods. There were certain astounding admirations to her account for men whom Caragh found intolerable.

She found them so herself after a brief experience, and always returned to him more charming for her mistakes, with the wry face of a child who comes from some unprofitable misdemeanor to be scolded and consoled.

So, with mutual concessions and disillusionment, their alliance—never worse than indiscreet—took the shape of a serene affection. On her part somewhat appropriative, and touched perhaps on

his with sentiment; yet, in the main, that rare arrangement between man and woman, a loyal and tender comradeship.

Caragh had, in consequence, cause to feel embarrassed by the news he carried.

Projects for his marriage had often made a jest between them, but neither had ever taken the idea seriously, and its development would come to her, as he knew, with all the baseness of a betrayal.

His sense of the cruelty of what he had to tell her endued him with a strange numbness and indifference to the fashion in which during dinner her hurt pride stabbed at him under the caresses of her manner. Beside her just resentment, this irritation because he had dared to keep her waiting seemed not to matter. He was so sorry for all she was to suffer because of him, that no lesser feeling seemed to count. He listened to Vernon's politics, to Kaptány's eulogy of *fogash*, but he was thinking only of what he had to say.

After dinner the Hungarian carried Vernon off to the club, and his hostess offered to keep Caragh until her husband's return.

He followed her upstairs to her sitting-room, and out on to a little balcony which overlooked the Danube.

The night had in it still the soft warmth of the September day, but the sky was dyed with violet, in which the stars were growing white. The river swept beneath them in a leaden humming flood, and beyond it the Castle and Hill of Buda stood black among the stars.

Ethel dropped into a low cane chair, and Caragh, seated upon the balustrade, took a long look at the darkening air before he turned and spoke to her.

He knew that an explanation was expected of him, reasonable, but not so reasonable as to evade reproaches; and an apology, not humble enough to be beneath reproof. He tendered both; and if they left his censor with quite false impressions, that, he reflected ruefully, came of the perverse requirements of a woman's mind.

Looking down at her lifted face below him, pale under the purple heaven

as though penetrated by the night, and still estranged, despite his pleading, over so trumpery a cause, he wondered how much, because of her beauty, woman had lost in understanding.

Beauty Ethel Vernon had in its most provoking, most illusive form. It came and went like the scent of a flower, left her passive and unpersuading, or lit her radiantly as a kindled lamp.

Even the shape of her spread skirts in the chair beneath him had in its vagueness something, some soft glow of sense, which made it expressive, and which made it hers. And he was anxious for peace, for peace at any price, from such a needless strife. What he had to tell her would be hard enough anyway; but it was, at all events, something with the dignity of fate. He could not speak of it while fighting this little foolish fit of outraged pride, and he would not speak of it while his tidings might seem to be touched with the malice of his punishment. For one moment he was tempted to let this idle quarrel grow into a cause of rupture—so easy with an offended woman—and thus be spared speech at all. It would be easier, more considerate for her, inclination told him, and ah! so acceptably easier and more considerate for himself. But the temptation was not for long. In all his unprofitable vacillations he had shirked nothing to which he had set his name. The only chance to get square with folly was, he knew, by paying the price of it, and the one gain possible in this worst of his blunders seemed to be its pain. He would go through with that.

Yet, though he had his chance that evening, had it thrust upon him, he did not take it. There is a limit even to one's appetite for pain.

But he made peace, having swallowed his scolding and admitted that the ways of men were mad. The talk turned to easier topics, and he looked with less apprehension at the silken shadow in the chair.

Then, with a sudden air of remembrance, Ethel put the question which had clung for hours to the end of her tongue.

"Oh! by the way, am I to congratulate you?"

"Well, I don't know," he said. "About what?"

"Oh, that's absurd!" she exclaimed with a nervous laugh. "Isn't there a Miss Nevin?"

"Two or three, I dare say," he conceded.

"Miss Persse only mentioned one," she said, looking keenly at the dark silhouette of his figure perched on the iron trellis among the stars. "But she wrote that you could tell us a good deal about *her*."

"I can," he allowed, serenely; "she's a charming creature."

"Sufficiently charming to be charmed by you?"

"So I flatter myself," he said. "I don't know even that I wouldn't put it—to be charmed *only* by me."

"Ah, that's too superlative," she sighed, derisively.

"To be said of any woman? Possibly! You're a woman and you ought to know," he reflected. "But she's the sort of woman one says rather more of than one ought."

"And rather more *to* than one ought."

"Well, yes, perhaps. One forgets, of course; but I fancy I must have said a good deal."

"She could listen to a good deal, no doubt," said Ethel Vernon, slowly.

"She could listen absorbingly," he replied, with ardor.

"And you said all you knew?"

"Heaven pity a poor woman! no! You forget my attainments. I said all that I was hopelessly ignorant of. That proved infinitely more attractive."

"I dare say it did," she agreed shortly. "Your ignorance of what you shouldn't say to a woman is past belief."

"I don't think it passed hers," he said, pensively. "She hasn't your capacity for distrust."

"She'll acquire it," returned the other dryly. "And what do you do in that sort of place? I heard you sailed with her."

"I sailed with her, I sat with her, I supped with her! The brother was obligingly occupied, and preoccupied,

with the estate—which yields about half what it costs him—and so she had to look after me."

"Which wasn't difficult?"

"Simplicity itself," he smiled. "She had to look such a very little way. I was never out of her sight."

"Idyllic!"

"It was. We sailed from the hour the mists lifted till the moon rose to show us home. Or we sat together on little beaches with only the wide seas in sight."

"Where she made love to you?"

"Where she made love to me. On a strand of fairy shells, with a sapphire pool beside us and her little arm about my neck."

Ethel Vernon laughed. "You're about the only man I know who would have told her to remove it."

"I didn't tell her to remove it. I abandoned myself to the situation. You didn't ask, by the way, if she were pretty."

"No, I heard that you had stayed there for a fortnight."

Caragh chuckled. "A very sage deduction," he replied. "Well, she is pretty, though you mightn't think so. It's the sort of prettiness that tempts you in."

"That tempts you in?" she questioned, irritably.

"Yes, tempts you in to the character. Like a lamp by the window of a cozy room. Makes you want to go in, and loll in a chair, and look at the pictures—there *are* pictures—and feel comfortably and gratefully at home. There's a kind of beauty, you know, to which one says: 'Yes, very charming; but for Heaven's sake, let's stay outside!'"

"But you didn't stay outside Miss Nevin's?" Ethel Vernon asked.

"Miss Nevern's," he corrected. "No, as I've told you, I went in, and walked around, and wondered how she had kept it so unspoiled. Most girls' minds are pasted over with appalling chromos of the emotions, as painted in fiction; and there's a stale taint of some one else's experience in everything they do and say; a precocious air of having been vicariously there before. It's quite

stimulating to come across a woman who is fresh to what she feels."

"Like the beautiful Miss Nevern! And how did it end?"

"Oh, how *does* it end?" he said with a sigh. "We vowed the endless everythings, and kissed, and parted. And here I am in Budapest!"

The lady in the chair looked up at him for some seconds with a slow smile upon her lips. "I wonder when you're going to be too old," she murmured, "to talk nonsense?"

"Oh, it wasn't nonsense," he answered, mournfully.

She began some question as to his journey, but he checked it with a lifted finger and a sudden "Hush!"

She could hear only the dull rush of the river and the waning rumble of the town. Then above these floated, blown soft and faint as a thistle-seed against their faces, a bugle note from the black Castle of Buda across the stream.

A wailing cadence, twice repeated, and then the long melancholy call, with all its intricate phrases delicately clear, now that their ears were adjusted to the thread of sound, ending as it had opened with the falling cadence which left a last low, mournful note upon the air.

"What is it?" she inquired as the sound faded.

"Last Post," he answered. "Wait!"

The gurgle of the river rose again, and the feeble murmur of the streets rejoined it. Then the call came once more, came with buoyant clearness through the blue night air, straight across the water.

The noises of the city seemed to cease, as though all stood listening to that fluting sweetness, and, when its last plaintive challenge died away, the slender echoes of other bugles could be heard repeating it to the distant barracks beyond the hill.

Long after the last was silent Caragh still stared out over the river at the giraffe of lights along its further shore and the scattered tapers which burned beyond it up the Castle slope into the sky.

"That seems to impress you very much," said Ethel Vernon, presently.

"It does impress me," he replied. "It doesn't seem to belong there."

He did not say why. It was seldom worth while to submit to a woman any sentiment that was unestablished. Convention was the passport to her understanding. But what, he wondered, had soldiers in common with that cry of the spent day? How were their blatant showy lives related to the impotent patience of its despair? It was as if some noisy roisterer had breathed a *Nunc Dimittis*.

But he only explained, when she pressed for his reason, that the call did not sound to him sufficiently truculent for a soldier's good-night.

He whistled its English equivalent. "That's more like it," he exclaimed. "The man who sleeps on that will sleep too deep to dream of anything but love, and blood and beer."

They talked on under the stars till Harry Vernon stumbled out on to the balcony from the darkness of the room, and began at once an energetic account of his evening at the Casino. He never consulted the interest of his hearers, but his voluble information generally made his interest theirs. He was to inspect, on the morrow, more than most men would have cared to look at in a week, and he was certain to see it all with the weighty sense of responsibility to his country which only an under-secretary can acquire. He apologized to his wife for leaving her introduction to the city with one as incompetent as Caragh to do it justice.

"He probably knows it a great deal better than you ever will," she laughed.

"He probably does," replied her husband, with a grin, "but the parts he knows best he won't be able to show you."

Caragh threw a cushion at the speaker's head as he turned to say good-night to his wife.

CHAPTER VI.

He went downstairs, and out on to the quay, turning southward along the river toward the Fövámház.

For a foreigner, he knew Pest well, but his knowledge only led him now by its loneliest avenue. He stood for a long while, his back to the empty market-place—which glowed by day with the red and orange of autumn ripeness—his elbows on the broad stone embankment, gazing out across the swirling river on which the starlight slid and shivered in darting streaks of gold.

He hated himself for what had taken place that evening, as he had often with equal reason hated himself before.

Somehow he seemed to lack the personal seriousness which saved men from treating their own affairs with the humorous tolerance which they extended to their neighbors! Life appeared to him the same comic spectacle from whatever point one saw it. Fate was often just as funny when it killed as when it crowned you, and however intimately they might annoy him, he never could keep back a laugh at its queer ways.

It was Fate's whim at present to make him look like a scoundrel by a deed that was probably as decent as any he would ever do, and the irony of his ill luck so tickled him that, in laughing at it, he had become really abominable.

A sentimentalist with a sense of humor cut, as he could see, a very poor figure; it were better, so far as appearances went, to be a pompous fool.

Self-esteem is so widespread a virtue that the world, whatever it may say, is always impressed even by ridiculous dignity, and its one universally unconvincing spectacle is the man laughing at himself. Besides, when a man finds himself absurd, what is he likely to think imposing?

Yet, for all his humor, Caragh sighed. For the moment, as on many previous moments, he craved the solemn personal point of view to make life seem for once of some importance and give him a taste of undiluted tears.

His reflections were interrupted by something rubbing against his leg.

It proved to be a little white dog, and he addressed some whimsical advice to

it about the time of night before looking out again upon the river. But, as the animal made no sign of movement, but merely shivered against his ankle, he lifted it up and set it on the parapet before him.

From an inspection there he found it to be all but half starved, with just strength enough to stand.

He was indifferent to dogs, and felt that the wisest course, as he explained to it, would be to drop the trembling creature into the water and out of a world that had used it so ill.

But he was very far from indifferent to the waif-like loneliness that gazed at him from its eyes, and, tucking it resignedly under his wrap, he turned back to the hotel.

He spent an hour there, feeding it with some biscuits that remained from his raft journey, soaked in whiskey and water, and then, since the little thing refused to rest but on the bed, he made the best of its odorous presence beside him, and only cursed his own soft-heartedness when waked occasionally by its tongue.

On the morrow he began to show Ethel Vernon the city, and for two days she was too interested and fatigued to find fault with him. She had discovered the terrier, and enthusiastically adopted it, to Caragh's relief, being as devoted to dogs as he was apathetic.

But on the third evening, when they were sitting again together upon the balcony after a quiet afternoon, she spoke her disappointment.

The night was as splendidly blue as it had been when they sat there before; and she, dressed in black, with blue-black sequins woven over her bodice and scattered upon her skirt, looked to be robed in some dark cluster of starlight in her corner of the balcony.

They had been talking of matters in which neither took much interest; then, after a long pause, she said, quietly: "Why are you so different?"

"I?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, please don't pretend," she sighed. "What is it?"

"I told you," he said, doggedly, "the other night."

"The other night?" she repeated. "What, when we were here?"

"Yes," he said.

She reflected for a moment. "About that girl, the one in Ireland? Do you mean that?"

"I do," he said.

"Do you mean it was true?" she asked, with increasing tenseness.

"Quite true," he said.

"But you were laughing," she protested, incredulously. "I took it for a joke."

"I'm always laughing," he said, grimly; "but I wish I hadn't been then. It was so serious that I couldn't be. But it's no good explaining that; you can't understand."

Her mind was set on something different—on something to her of more moment than a man's absurd reasons for being trivial. It was some time before she spoke.

"You asked her to marry you?" she pondered, slowly, only half in question, as though scarcely able to realize what he had done.

"I did," he said; "how else should we be engaged?"

"Oh, dozens of ways," she answered; "she might have asked you."

"Well, she didn't," he said, stoutly.

"I wonder if you know," she mused; "men don't. And did you want to marry her?"

"Would I have asked her otherwise?" he demanded.

"Oh, yes," she sighed; "very possibly. Men often propose because they can think of nothing else to say. And have you wanted to be married long?"

"What do you mean?" he said.

"Three months?" she queried.

The light little head was tilted sideways in its old fascinating way. It was not so dark but he might have seen it had he not been staring at the stars. He might even have noticed, had he looked closer, how wide her eyes were, and how unsteady the small mouth.

"Why three months?" he said.

"Wasn't it three months ago we were at Bramley Park?" she went on, reflectively. "Can you still remember what you told me there?"

"Was it different from what I told you everywhere?" he parried.

"No—o!" she murmured, with a long wavering breath; "not until to-night. You said you could never, while I lived, think of marrying another woman."

"Yes," he assented; "I remember. We were looking down at the moonlight on the lake."

"We were," she said. "And you had your hand on mine. You put it there; you put it there as you spoke. Were you thinking how wonderfully easy it was to fool a woman?"

"I've never fooled you, nor tried to fool you," he answered, quietly. "I've cared for you too much for that. No, not in the common way; but because you've always been such an honest and good friend to me. Some women insist on being fooled; they make any sort of truth to them impossible. You made a lie."

"So it seems now," she said, wistfully.

"No," he replied, "it seems now just the opposite. But I can't help that."

"You could have helped it—once," she said.

"Oh, we can always help things once," he objected.

"Did you know her when we were at Bramley?"

"Yes, very slightly."

"Very slightly, only three months ago," she repeated, incredulously.

"Yes," he said.

There was a pause. Ethel Vernon's fingers were playing nervously with a ring.

"When did you want to marry her?" she asked, at length.

He hesitated in his turn.

"I can't tell you that," he said.

"Why?" she questioned. "Don't you know?"

"I know perfectly," he said.

"Well?" she queried. Then, as he made no response, "Haven't I the right to know?"

"I can't say," he answered. "I haven't the right to tell you."

"Why?"

"It isn't only mine to tell," he said.

"It's hers, you mean?" she exclaimed.

"Everything's hers, I suppose, now; everything that you once could call your own! Did you ever share your life with *me* in that fashion?"

"You forget," he said, gravely. "She shares herself."

Ethel Vernon leaned toward him fiercely.

"Do you mean——" she began, impetuously, and stopped.

He turned and looked steadily into her angry eyes. Her quick breath spread the starlight to a vague and smoky blueness among the gleaming sequins on her breast.

"Yes," he said, "that is probably what I *do* mean. First or last, whatever you may call her, it's the woman's self that counts."

She remained for a moment with her eyes still passionately alight, and something visible even in the dusk upon her face which she would and would not say. Then her mouth hardened, and she flung herself back in her chair.

"I hate you," she cried.

"No," he said, with a sigh; "you hate the fact. Every woman does whom it doesn't profit."

There was nothing said between them for some minutes, and Caragh could hear the silk ripple as her foot swung to and fro among the ruchings of her skirt. The sound brought back another silence, when she had sat beside him on an English summer evening in a dusk almost as deep; brought back the hour from that scented night when, with the spells of strangeness still upon her charm, he had listened to her ankles' silken whisper, and felt in the dark the unendurable sweetness of her presence rob his life of its desires.

He was carried so far by the memory that the change in her voice startled him when she spoke again.

"What did you tell her about me?" she demanded.

"I didn't tell her anything," he said. "She hasn't asked about your past?"

"Not yet."

"You think she won't?"

"Oh, no, I don't," he smiled.

"And when she does! Will you tell her the usual lie?"

"Did I tell it to you?"

"You didn't ask me to marry you," she thrust back. "One treats the woman differently that one's going to share."

"Yes," he admitted, doubtfully, "it's very possible one does. Only I think the sharing works the other way. One tells her the truth in common honesty."

"Never!" she exclaimed. "You tell her the truth in transcendental lunacy, and wish you'd bitten your tongue out five minutes later when you see she thinks you a sweep."

He turned toward her with a smile. "I'm afraid my transcendental lunacies are about done," he said.

She laughed. "To judge by the last of them," she retorted.

"The last of them!" he exclaimed, reprovingly. "You shouldn't speak of marriage by so wild a name."

"I don't," she said, shortly; "only of yours. Will you swear to me that you love her?"

"Willingly," he answered, "if you're unwise enough to ask."

"To ask for an oath which would have no meaning?"

"None whatever," he replied. "What would you expect?"

"The truth!" she said. "Isn't it due to me?"

"Yes," he admitted, "and you've had it; though it hasn't been easy. Consider if a man is likely to relish the sort of confession that I've made to you."

"You couldn't very well avoid it," she reminded him.

"Oh, yes, I could," he said. "I might have quarreled with you—you're uncommonly easy to quarrel with—and then—when you heard of my engagement you'd have put it down to pique."

"You thought of doing that?" she asked, distrustfully.

"Yes, I thought of that and of a dozen other ways of—well, of taking you in," he admitted, "and of getting out of it myself."

"It doesn't sound very brave," she said, softly.

"No, it sounds uncommon paltry, I've no doubt," he agreed. "I funkied it, and I tried to think it would have been

kinder as well as pleasanter to keep you in the dark. Would it?"

She shook her head.

"Well, I don't know," he reflected, doubtfully; "I fancy you'd sooner have thought that *you* had done it than that *I* had, however little you might have liked it. And you'd have been a bit sorry for me, instead of thinking me a beast."

"I'm sorry for you as it is," she answered, quietly.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"I don't believe you love her," she said, unsteadily.

"Oh, well," he murmured, with a shrug; "then I can't persuade you."

She shook her head again—the little tossing shake which reminded Caragh sharply of how she used to tease him, through the curls that sometimes fell across her eyes. He was looking at the stars before she spoke again.

"I think there's one thing you might tell me which wouldn't hurt her if I knew," she said, persuasively. "Was it because you'd come to care less for me that—that you—that you asked her?"

He rose from his seat, and leaned against the iron trellis of the balcony, looking out across the river.

"Was it?" she pleaded.

"No!" he said to the night. He turned presently and took a step to enter the room. "Time I went," he said, checking his progress as he passed her chair.

She laid her fingers upon his sleeve. "Morrie!" she whispered.

He stooped and kissed her face, while her detaining hand slipped with a soft pressure into his.

Then she let it go, and sat, listening as the sound of his footsteps died away beyond the room; sat gazing out at the moving sky, with a face from which the light had faded, till Henry Vernon's voice surprised her dreams.

CHAPTER VII.

It was in the following June that Caragh found himself preparing for his

final visit to Ballindra. Lettice Nevern and her brother had been in town for some six weeks during the winter, and his business affairs having straightened themselves, and enabled him to anticipate a sufficiently plausible income for two people, he had asked Arthur Nevern formally for his sister's hand.

Nevern understood the proposal and the man who made it so slightly, that, displeased by the prospective loss of an admirable housekeeper, he began to pile up, breathlessly, inflated obstacles to its fulfilment.

Caragh heard him out.

"It's a confounded nuisance, of course, for you," he said; "these sort of things always are for somebody. That's why I've waited to get my side of it square before bothering you, so that you'd know for certain from the outset when your sister would be leaving you. We're not going to decide where to settle till we can look at places together, so that won't make for delay, but she refuses to be hurried over her kit, as it's to provide six months' food for some pet school of hers in Ballindra, so I've given her till July. The only question is, would you sooner the wedding was over there or here?"

Arthur Nevern stared at the younger man's directness, but he discovered speedily that he might stare as he pleased.

The little that Lettice had was in her own right, and Caragh had asked no more with her from the man before him.

Nevern was thus left with nothing to refuse but his consent, and that, apparently, was of no consequence to those who asked it.

He gave it at last, as ungraciously as he could, and agreed later that the ceremony should be in London, in order to share its expense with an aunt of his who had offered her house.

He twitted Caragh with his impatience, and Caragh smiled.

His smile touched a point of humor unlikely to tickle a future brother-in-law, but he suggested that a man's hurry to be married seldom appealed to his friends.

He might have added that the rea-

sons for it in his own case did not appeal to himself, but they were too serious and disconcerting even for his sense of the ridiculous.

They were, put briefly, the possible attraction of another woman; and it was his despairing self-contempt that goaded him to dispose, so high-handedly, of any obstacles to his marriage with Lettice Nevern.

It was particularly characteristic of him, that while reflecting almost every hour on some fantastic chance that might avert their union, he applied his foot with an almost unmannerly intolerance to any of the reasonable hindrances in its way. That was of a piece, no doubt, with his marked aversion from any form of moral hedging, and his preferred fondness for an honest lie.

He had stayed at Budapest for three days after his confession, to keep Ethel Vernon company till her husband's engagements were at an end. He had asked her if she wished him to remain, and she had said, indifferently, that he must please himself. He did not please himself; but he did not go.

The terms on which they met and spoke were strained and curious.

Caragh, in his perverse fashion, found them stimulating. Ethel made not the faintest reference to what he had told her, but she treated him neither with the familiar plainness into which they had fallen, nor as a common and secure acquaintance.

There was about her bearing an extraordinary delicacy and distance such as a girl uses to deny herself to the man to whom, unconscious, she has, proudly and irretrievably, given her heart.

Having exhausted the interests of the town, they spent the time in long drives to the places she expressed a wish to see in the country; an occupation not pre-eminently adapted to an evasive relationship.

On the fourth morning she said to him, simply:

"I can't stand it any more. You must go."

"Have I been a brute?" he asked.

"No," she said; "you've been extremely nice. Perhaps that's why. I don't know; I've tried not to know. Perhaps I may feel differently when I meet you again. I can't say. I dare say not. But I can't go on as we are. You don't mind my asking, do you? I don't think you wanted to stay. Why should you? I can make up something to Henry about your going; there's always the telegraph to account for things. And don't write, please, unless I ask you to. I'm going to try to forget you—if I can. What's the use of doing anything else? I've been a fool enough as it is."

There was in Caragh's eye the remembrance of days when it seemed as if that desired oblivion would be his to seek, days when his devotion had appeared to be quite obliterated from her memory by the surprising splendor of some one else.

That was, of course, the last thing of which he could remind her, but it was, too, the last he could forget.

He had accepted the real misery of those days without murmuring; at least he might use their ancient poison as an anodyne now. Not to excuse, nor to exalt himself, but to dilute, as it were, now that he had to drink it, the cup of her indignation.

It made the source of that seem, at least, not quite so much of his own mixing to remember that, twice at least in the last two years, he might have drifted from her on occasions when her attention was too engrossed by another to notice that he was gone.

He would have liked in the friendliest fashion to have led her memory to those days, to show her how dispensable he was; only, he reflected, one never knew how a woman would take that sort of consolation; he was not very sure if he would value it himself.

And when it came to his good-bys, he felt anything but fitted for the consoler's office. He had come to Pest bitterly grieved to lose a friend; but he left it like a baffled lover.

The shy strangeness of her manner and the proud distance in her eyes had brought again about Ethel Vernon the

glamour of days when his heart beat quicker at her approach.

With every hour of indifference the old provocation in her presence grew, He felt that to stay would be but to yield to it again, and he heard with a dismal relief her sentence of exile.

He set himself rigidly to pack his things, yet where to go he could not determine. That invisible bond which tied him to the future made all the difference to a man's plans. The East beckoned—he was halfway to it—and the green harbors of the Asian coast.

But that meant money, as he knew of old, and it was lack of money that had deferred his vow. In all honesty, he could not spend upon himself what he had half pledged to another. He turned disconsolately toward home.

He drifted about during the autumn from one shoot to another. It was his ordinary occupation for three months of the year, yet now it seemed unusual. It seemed outside a new continuity of existence which had begun for him.

But he devoted himself to settling his affairs, and was able in consequence, as has been narrated, to propose himself as an unwelcome relative when Arthur Nevern was in town.

Caragh had looked forward doubtfully to meeting Lettice again, under conditions which might suit her so much less well as a background than the open downs and the sea. But his forebodings were gloomy enough to be disappointed.

She had some art in dress, as he had noted from her evening frocks, and if in the daytime she seemed for town sometimes a trifle decorative, it was a decoration on which those who passed her bestowed an approving eye. She needed a certain amplitude to set her off. The big fur collar, and the expansive hat made the modeling of her face seem daintier than it was. With her hat off, her prettiness owed everything to the fair, fine hair that curled almost to her eyes. Maurice had once brushed it back in a playful moment, but he never risked the disillusionment again. He needed every aid to his attachment that artifice could supply.

She seemed, on her part, to be aware that her beauty required management. It was not of a sort to be worn with a disdainful indifference as to how it might strike you.

It had to be looked after, or it didn't strike you at all. She kept a conscious eye upon her fringe, and she left occasionally, as Caragh had noticed, a harmless confederate with her complexion on the lapels of his coat.

He brushed off the powder with a mixed sense of regret and gratitude. He was sorry she needed it, but, since the need was there, better she had the wit to know it and the ambition to look her best. Better far than to suppose with an arrogant vanity that to his infatuation nothing could come amiss.

Of what, indeed, came most amiss she probably had not a suspicion. The breezy life of Ballindra had admitted few mental interests, and, in the country, character, which it develops, often has the air of mind. In Lettice, whose character was charming, the resemblance had deceived Caragh. But in London, where character sinks and mind is on the surface, his estimate was corrected.

He endured dreary plays in which she delighted; he sat bravely at ballad concerts; he listened without a groan to her enthusiasms upon domestic art; he tried to read the books she praised.

The outlook was depressing. The same fear touched him that must have fallen upon Babel. Here, for life, was a companion who, on its finer interests, would never understand a word he said. He might, perhaps, bring her painfully to a sense of her unsuspected ineptitude; might make her mechanically conscious of the commonplace; might shake her faith in ignorance as a standard of art. He might, in fact, taint the sincerity of her admirations. That was all.

In art—and art is but the tenderer appreciation of life—they would never use the same language, never understand each other's speech. The marvelling thrill of familiar strangeness, of joyous apprehension, which the subtlety of art can wake in the initiate, they would never share.

That was not much to miss, perhaps; but, when Caragh tried to think of something its absence would not affect, he stopped in dismay.

Yet, apart from her appearance, in spite of her deficiencies, the girl's love wrought a change in him of which, with surprise, he found himself aware.

It became less of an effort to return her caresses, and her kisses no longer made him feel guilty of impersonating her lover.

They never woke in his veins even a momentary ardor, and now, his pulse beat under them no whit the faster, but he had begun to grow susceptible to the quickened throb of hers. The shy renouncement of her self-restraint, as she let the secrets of her being pass, between queer little moods of resistance, into the strangeness of his power, moved him to a sense of protective tenderness he had never felt before.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was shortly after he had said a last good-by to Lettice Nevern that Caragh's troubles began afresh.

He had the best intention to acquire the married habit, or a habit, at any rate, that should differ widely from the one he had.

With that object he secluded himself for a fortnight from the life to which he was accustomed, and denied his company, for reasons which they vigorously disbelieved, to his friends.

He could allow himself the theatre, having never cherished lime-lit illusions, nor hovered to dispel them about the stage door. He had always what he was pleased to call a frugal taste in beauty, and had never made a bid for any that was "priced!"

But the theatres served him only for a week, and even so with some exaggeration of what he wished to see. At the end of a second, he decided that a wife was as essential as repentance to a change of life, and dropped back into his old ways.

And the devil, who, perhaps as a re-prisal for the deficiencies of his own

abode, takes a pleasure in knocking the bottom out of every sort of domicile, at once put his foot through the flooring of Maurice Caragh's reform.

At least, he met Laura Marton at the dinner which closed his fortnight's sojourn in the wilderness.

He was suffering from those two weeks of his own society, but, probably, even without that preparation, he would have capitulated to her charm.

To speak of him, so consecutively, in the hands of three women, gives too crowded an impression of his susceptibility. No trait was, in fact, further from his character.

Three years were passed since he met Ethel Vernon, and he had not harbored in all of them so much as a vexed thought about a woman's face.

He was pleased so far from easily, that he might very readily have failed throughout his life to have been pleased at all. But when pleased, it was on the instant and absorbingly. Ten seconds he had suggested as an average requirement for falling in love, but it is questionable if any of his own declensions had taken half that time. Nor was proximity at all essential. He could not recall, he admitted modestly, having discovered that a woman was adorable at more than a hundred yards. But he had no wish to exalt his own experience into a standard: he could believe in anything up to half a mile.

In that, such was the delicacy of his distinctions, he was perfectly sincere; but it was that delicacy which made them so prohibitive to adorations even at half a mile.

Laura Marton might, perhaps, have tested such a distance successfully, she was so perfectly his conception of a type.

He conceived a good deal in types, and preferred the typical even to the length of its deficiencies.

Deficiency did indeed play a part in Laura Marton's attractions, since the broad mouth, the long eyes, and the drowsy luxuriance of her figure were without everything that could make them harmless.

She came under the superbs in Car-

agh's catalogue, and to the superb he was almost a stranger.

That, perhaps, speeded his intimacy.

"You can take it for granted that I think you magnificent," he said at their first meeting.

This was their last. It epitomized sufficiently what had happened in the interval. Some of it might be accounted for by his having told her that the next interval was forever.

The occasion was a dance at a big house in Grosvenor Square. It was Caragh's last appearance as a bachelor in town, since he started on the morrow for a trip which the owners of a new Atlantic liner were taking in her around the Isles. He was to be dropped at Ballindra, where his marriage, for recent family reasons, was after all to take place.

He was seated on a lounge in a blind passage near the top of the house, and, though still early in the evening, he had been sitting there for some time.

He knew the house more intimately than most of those who were seeking for such seats, and this one was left to him and his partner entirely undisturbed. The music floated up the stairs with varying distinctness, as the dancers choked the entrances to the great gallery below.

He was leaning back, with his arms half folded and a hand upon his mouth, looking straight before him.

Laura Marton, sitting sideways, with one white arm along the top of the lounge, and the sweep of her amber-colored skirts against his feet, bent forward insistently toward him; a braid of gold across her splendid shoulders, and a band of turquoise in her brown hair.

The long, soft fawn gloves were crumpled in her lap, and her left arm, which hung straight and bare beside her, tapped a turquoise fan against her ankle as she waited for his reply.

"I know," he sighed. "You don't and you can't see it; what's the use of my saying it again? You're sure no woman would care for what I'm giving her, if she only knew. I dare say; but, you see, she's not going to know. She's going to luxuriate in an apparent adora-

tion. That's easier than to be happy with one that's inapparent, however actual. And it's a lot likelier that the make-believe will last; because—well, because there's nothing in it not to."

He smiled whimsically at his own English, but the girl's face darkened with a frown.

"It makes no difference how you put it," she exclaimed, hotly; "the thing's detestable! You'll only look at it from your point of view; and because it's costing you so much, you think it must be worth all that to the girl. But it's not! You're getting her life, and everything that's in her and of her, and you're getting it for a lie! You think it's a fine lie, I know, the sort of lie that life is all along. You've told me that! Oh, yes, you have; or something like it. But what are *you* that you should handle a woman as if you had made her, and lie to her like a god! Do you think you're big enough to make that seem fair?"

"Ah, you don't understand," he murmured, still staring before him, afraid to stir the fire in her smoldering eyes. "I'm doing this because I'm so small."

Her incredulous gasp was almost a repudiation; but she said nothing, and he went on:

"Because the love that's worth perfidies and desolation and all the other personal superlatives will never come my way. I thought it would; yes! once, long ago. But it hasn't, and it won't. If I was big enough!"—he caught his breath—"Ah, that's another matter. For *that* love excuses everything—'red ruin and the breaking up of laws'—because it's bigger, and better, and more enduring than the world itself. But it isn't mine."

He stopped, and faced for an instant the furious blaze of her eyes. Then he said, more slowly:

"So the next best thing seemed, for a man like me, to make a good girl's dreams come true; her dreams of love, and honor, and a man's desire—when one is the man, and can."

"You're not the man!" she cried. "And it's wicked and cruel to pretend to be."

"Look here!" he said, persuasively. "Suppose that you were as poor a thing as I am; suppose that you, too, had come to look for no more from love than it means to me, and that some one came along who took you for an angel; a man young, and strong, and pure, with the one great passion of a lifetime showing all over him; and that, in too weak or too kind a moment, you had let him take you in his arms, and let him believe then as true the dreams that he had dreamed of you, and sealed with your kisses the vows which he had sworn. Well! when you'd come to realize that all his strength and sweetness hung on his belief in you, would you call it wicked and cruel to go on with the pretense?"

She made no answer for some moments. The grip of her white fingers relaxed upon the couch and the fan hung quiet against her ankle as she continued to absorb him with her devouring eyes.

"You've forgotten *me*," she whispered, at length.

"No," he protested; "you can't say that, can you? I told you at once."

"Told me what?" she demanded.

"That I was not free," he said.

"Yes," she exclaimed, "the very first time you spoke to me. As if I were certain to lose my heart if I had not been warned. I hated you pretty hotly for it, too, I can assure you. And you might have saved yourself the trouble. I'd been told it before."

"Before?"

"Yes, by Ethel Vernon. She said, when she heard I was to meet you: 'He's going to marry a girl that he doesn't care a sou for.' How did she know?"

"She didn't know," he said.

"How did she guess, then? Had you been in love with *her*?"

"Yes."

"She with you?"

"You forget," he said, gravely; "she's a married woman."

"I did forget," she smiled. "And was there no one you were in love with between her and me?"

"I'm not in love with you," he said.

She smiled again, drearily. "Does it do you any good to say that?" she asked.

"No," he answered; "I said it for you."

"For *me*?" she objected.

"Yes," he replied; "you said I'd forgotten you."

"Do you call that remembering?" she inquired, ruefully.

"Don't you?" he murmured. "Would I have said it for myself?"

"Said what?" she asked.

"That I'm not in love with you."

"I dare say," she said.

"Even if it had not been true?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I dare say," she said.

"Do you?" he smiled. "It's a good deal to dare." He drew a long, unsteady breath. "Well," he sighed, "suppose it wasn't?"

"Wasn't true?" she said.

"Wasn't true," he repeated, slowly. "Suppose that I've—willfully—lied to you. Suppose that the hour I saw your face brought my lost dreams back to me; suppose that in you I found the woman for want of whom all my days have in despair been wasted; the one woman who could have made life splendid, and love passionate and ceaseless and supreme. Or, no! not even that, not even that! Suppose only that I felt your fascination as any man might feel it; that I was just bewitched by your beauty; that every day without its glamour was the darkness of death, and the thought of other men possessing it an unendurable torment. Suppose which you please, whichever seems to you simplest, or strangest, or most deplorable—and tell me again you think it was for my own sake that I was silent!"

The musing tone in which he had begun was gone before he ended. He had turned to her, even as he leaned a little back and away against the end of the lounge; his shoulders were squared, and his brows drawn above the gray eyes which gazed almost defiantly into her face.

And as his mood hardened, hers had melted.

Darkness had spread again across her eyes; spread as the night above a lighted river—its depths a-glimmer with strange reflections, and her lips had fallen softly apart from their disdainful smile into an unconscious baby sweetness, through which she breathed.

She was listening with an absorbed intentness, with all her senses crowding to her ears.

Even her splendid carriage was relaxed; her bosom drooped; dark hollows showed about her throat; her chin sank, till the white shoulder on which she leaned almost touched a tiny ear; the fan slipped from her other hand and hung by the loop about her wrist.

Her eyes met his as he ended; and, as it were, beneath the long silence of that look he could hear the brushing sound of the breath between her parted lips like the far-off pulse of the sea.

But he missed so the other change which came to her; came, as it were, when the senses which had been away, so tensely listening, returned with their news. They brought back no erectness to her bearing, but deepened and colored her drooping beauty till its languor became in itself a mien, a seduction that grew more perilous and overpowering with each quickening breath that filled her breast.

But of all that Caragh noticed nothing. He saw only those wavering lights in the liquid darkness of her eyes, a darkness that spread about him till he felt the draught and swirl of its unknown waters.

It was from that he was taken by the sudden fastening of the girl's hands about his face, and he woke with a flash of enlightenment to all that was in hers.

He tried to shake his head, but she only tightened her fingers about it and drew it toward her, smiling, with a strength that astonished him.

"Don't," he said.

But she pressed her wrists against his cheeks till his mouth was crushed between them, and drew him closer; closer to the strange smile upon her lips

—cruel, passionate, triumphant, and yet adoringly fond—which seemed to come

from beyond the borders of the world he knew.

Then, with a bird's swiftness, her lips were against his face, bruising it with the wildness of her kisses, as she held it in a clutch that pained him to the plundering madness of her mouth.

Unable to speak, he caught her wrists to draw them from his face, but at the touch of her skin his hands lost the power to help him, and hung idly like heavy bracelets upon her arms.

They had slipped to her elbows and fallen unclasped from them, when, as suddenly as she had seized him, she thrust his face from her to the full length of her arms and held it there, gazing into it with the fury of despoiled possession, which had the same savage strangeness as her smile.

Caragh's eyes were gravely distressed. "Don't, don't!" he pleaded.

Then she opened her hands and threw his face out of them away from her, with a little low, crying laugh horrible to hear, and sat, leaning sideways and motionless, her head propped on her wrist, looking away from him across the back of the lounge.

Caragh merely straightened himself in the corner where she had flung him. He did not turn to look at her, and said nothing.

There was something in what had happened past explaining; its very lawlessness made it natural, put it outside of everything, in a place by itself where there were no measurements, where there was no proportion.

He was unconscious of any surprising experience, and did not give a thought to what might be passing in the girl's mind.

And she, sitting there with that wrecked air of passion, seemed as utterly indifferent how she appeared to him.

"You were right," he said, at length, looking straight before him; "I've done it all for myself."

She gave him, without turning, a glance from her exhausted eyes, but took no further notice.

"I'm going back because I *daren't* fail her. I think too little of myself,

God knows, to risk thinking less. Can you understand that? I was falling lower and lower, losing hope that I could ever be constant to anything that loved me. Then she came. It hadn't mattered with the others. I was only something to them that any one could be. But she was different—different because she had never loved before, and I meant everything to her that love can mean to a woman's life, everything that is sacred and tender and divine. And I saw in keeping her love pure and happy the one thing that could lift me out of the pit and let me look myself in the face again. It's the one chance that's been given me, and if I can't take it I'm done for. Yes, it's sheer selfishness, as you said; but I'm going back to her. Do you understand?"

She did not move nor look around at him. "You love me," she said, dully.

"It makes no difference," he answered.

She gave a little mirthless laugh.

"But it will," she said; "it will. You'll remember me when *she* can't understand you, and my kisses when you're sick of hers, and my arms when she's asleep beside you. You won't think *then* that it makes no difference. You won't say *then* that she was the one chance for you. You'll remember *then* that a woman loved you whose love was all that you had dreamed. Maurice, Maurice, you're not the sort of man that makes a saint!"

He turned to her and put out his hand. "I'm going," he said. "Good-by!"

She laid her left hand in it. Hers was quite cold, but she shivered as she touched him. "Will you come back to me ever?" she asked.

He shook his head.

"Never?"

"Never, never!"

"If you want me, you must say," she went on, impassively. "It won't matter what I'm doing—I mean if I'm married, or anything. If you want me, I'll come to you. But you must say. Love—ah! you don't know what it means!"

He left her with a pressure of the hand, and she caught a glimpse of him

as he groped his way toward the stairs. But she did not stir, nor try to stop him.

CHAPTER IX.

Caragh sat with his back to the saloon skylight, watching the cloud-shadows racing over the soft green Irish coast.

Between him and it was a heaving space of dark blue water, crested here and there with gleaming white.

The gale of the night was blowing itself out, but the wind still sang against the spars that swung to and fro through a wider arc of the sky than most of the guests on board found compatible with an appearance at breakfast.

Woolly flocks of white cloud came up from the Atlantic, raced through the clear blue overhead, and huddled down together behind the land.

It was a day boisterous with the joy of life, but Caragh's face showed no appreciation of its quality. His chair slid forward and back with the rolling deck, but his eyes were fixed gloomily upon the green hills, and he paid no heed to his own movement.

His somber absorption gave him the appearance of being affected by the floundering seas; but he never suffered from seasickness, and was grateful to the gale for having cleared the deck of the ship's jovial company.

He wished to be by himself, and yet it was himself that he was most anxious to evade; it was from self-sickness that he was suffering.

He had spoken the truth in telling Laura Marton that the faith in Lettice Nevern's eyes was his one hope of deliverance. He believed, if he could respond to that, even with the honest dishonesty which alone was possible—if he could, as he told her, "make a good girl's dreams come true"—that he might in time build up for himself an artificial constancy, and so regain his self-esteem.

That hope seemed not too high, face to face with the woman who was doing her best to shatter it. It sustained him while he was fighting her fascination—

successfully, as he told himself; while he was dragging his weakness, in a wounded sort of triumph, out of her reach; while he was hurrying his things on board the day after.

But there, unluckily, his victory ended. Seated apathetically in a deck-chair on the *Candia*, watching the long coast slip by from Thanet to the Lizard, the leaden turmoil of the Channel, and then the clouded purples of the Kerry Hills, he learned how superficial was his advantage, how deeply he was in bondage.

He had, indeed, got out from England, but he had brought so little of himself away that it seemed an impertinence to offer it to any woman in marriage. His heart—or, at least, what in such affairs is called the heart—and all those cravings of the body which go with the heart were, and would remain, in Laura Marton's keeping.

She was right in every boast of her dominion over him. She was the woman for whom he had not waited, of whom long ago he had despaired. The woman who could have satisfied him, body and soul, absorbing his desires, inspiring his dreams.

No partiality in the past had persuaded him to imagine that of any woman he had admired. They were just what they were—dainty, lovely, brilliant, bewitching; but nothing more to him than to any one who had a taste for them.

But here at last was the woman made for him, made for him; warm with that fugitive spirit of sense which was in her only and for him alone.

He knew that, though he knew not how he knew it, as certainly, as responsiveness as a lock knows the wards of its key.

It was as a key that she had entered him; and within him, at her moving, the levers of a secret life had stirred—a strange new complexity of being which no mortal influence had disturbed before.

She had revealed to him all that life had not yielded him, all that now it could never yield, a correlation undreamed of between man and woman.

And she had come curiously too late. That was his bitterness. He would have sacrificed for her every other allegiance of the past, save this one which brought him no pleasure. From Lettice Nevern he could only come to her as a man debased forever in his own esteem. Nothing could excuse such a betrayal, nothing could redeem him after it was done.

Happiness with the woman he must marry was out of the question; but happiness without her was now for him equally uncompassable. He had a choice only between two sorts of despair. Under such conditions it seemed improbable that he would prove a very cheerful companion, but such predictions were with Caragh especially difficult. His humor was always available for his own misfortunes, and in this case his fortune was too deplorable not to be concealed.

Since it entirely absorbed his unconscious thoughts his attention always seemed preoccupied; an abstraction which lent, however, an agreeable effect of detachment from ordinary worries.

He was, perhaps, for that reason, the serenest member of the ship's company, and the one most obligingly at the service of other men's affairs.

But on this windy morning he was allowed to reflect on his own adversities, till a shout from forward called his eyes toward the shore.

The *Candia* had just cleared a long headland and opened the narrow bay beyond, where, canted slightly to starboard, lay a big three-master, the rags of her royals and a staysail slapping the wind, the long blue rollers breaking against her in spouts of foam.

She was evidently on the rocks, and yet an impracticable distance from the forbidding shore, which swept in a purple skirting of cliff about her. Dark figures could be seen moving on the bridge and in the rigging, and the flutter of a woman's skirts could be made out against the shrouds.

The *Candia* stood in toward the shore, and her decks were soon crowded with excited passengers, waiting anxiously the lowering of a boat

and speculating on the way in which a rescue would be attempted.

A line of color ran up to the bark's peak, and was answered presently by a signal from the steamer; then the engines slowed and stopped.

The *Candia* rolled ponderously in the long swell while another signal was exchanged, the splash of the lead becoming suddenly audible in the silence.

The vessels were now not more than five hundred yards apart, and every detail could be seen upon the wreck.

Save for the few figures on the bridge and poop, all those on board her had taken to the rigging, as the sloping decks were swept by the heavier waves.

Several women could be seen on her, and the glass showed them to be lashed to the shrouds, and apparently exhausted.

Each fresh evidence of urgency increased the impatience on board the *Candia*. Yet no scheme of assistance seemed in progress. The engines were reversed, the *Candia* backed in a trifle closer, the roar of the breakers began to make a continuous moil in the air, but the boats hung undisturbed on their davits.

The captain was on the bridge and could not be questioned, but presently Sir Anthony Palmer, who, as chairman of the *Candia*'s company, was superintending the cruise, was seen coming aft with a grave face.

He said, in answer to a volley of questions, that no help could be given till the sea went down and the tide had risen. A ledge of rocks lay between the two ships, already defined occasionally by a thrash of foam over which no boat could pass.

The stranger must have been carried across it at high water some hours earlier, had struck on a second ledge between that and the shore, and was now equally cut off from succor from the sea or from the land.

Rockets were at once suggested, but Sir Anthony explained that the distance was too great for a rocket line to cover, and that the tides precluded the floating in of a buoy. Nothing could be done but wait and pray that the vessel might

not break up during the next twelve hours.

Some one asked if she were likely to, and Sir Anthony admitted that she had signaled her fears of such an event.

"Couldn't some one swim to her?" said a voice from the taffrail.

Sir Anthony shook his head; to cross the ledge with the break of water on it at present would be to court almost certain death.

There was a pause; all eyes were turned toward the reef, where the vessel lay in the gay morning, like some masquerade of death, between the lovely colors of the sea and shore.

Caragh leaned back in his chair with a yawn, and looked up at the sky.

"I'll take a line to her," he said, placidly.

The backs of the heads between him and the ship's side became suddenly a ring of faces, and the first stupidity of surprise was expressed by the question: "Can you swim?"

Caragh looked at them with no expression of interest, and Sir Anthony shook his head.

"You couldn't do it, my dear fellow," he protested; "you couldn't do it!"

"Perhaps not," said Maurice; "but I can have a try." Sir Anthony's hands and head shook in voluble negation.

"The captain wouldn't permit it for a moment," he asserted.

"Well," said Caragh, "of course the captain can refuse me the use of a line, but he can't, without being very unpleasant, prevent my going overboard."

There was an instant's pause, and then the group about the chair burst into simultaneous suggestion and advice.

Caragh was slapped on the shoulder; his previous performances in the water were demanded; encouragement and remonstrance were alternately tendered, and everything obvious on the situation was said.

"I'm not a professional performer," he explained at last, "but I can keep afloat as long as most men, and if I'm ready to take the risks of a swim, I don't think it should be any one's business to stop me."

This met a varied response, and with a general acclamation for the captain the speakers were moving forward when that officer appeared, looking for Sir Anthony, who at once put the case to him.

The captain, with a glance at Caragh still seated in his chair, dismissed the matter with a shrug of his shoulders. But he had miscalculated the passiveness of the man before him.

Caragh got quietly upon his feet, looked across the water at the wreck, and then turned to the captain.

"If you can't spare me a line to take on board her, I'll have to bring you back one of hers," he said.

"I forbid you to leave the ship," replied the other, briefly.

"Of course you can do that," said Caragh, looking again across the sea, "but it won't make a pretty story if those poor devils are drowned under our eyes."

At that moment a sailor brought the signaling slate aft to the captain, who looked glum and handed it to Sir Anthony.

"Tide's leaving her," he explained.

"Her back is breaking, is that it?" asked Sir Anthony.

The captain nodded.

"She won't hold together long after that?"

"Probably not," said the captain.

Caragh's offer found none but backers when the gravity of the signal was made known.

The captain still protested its insanity, but he was persuaded in the end to withdraw his prohibition and do what was possible to start the venture with the best chances of success.

The ship was to be taken a little nearer the southern shore to give the swimmer what help could be had from the tide, and the lightest line on board was prepared while Caragh went below to strip, accompanied by a couple of admirers, who insisted on the necessity of his being oiled before entering the water.

As he never expected to come out of it alive he had no wish for oil, but did

desire urgently to be left alone for the next few moments.

He had made his offer from no surge of sympathy, no flush of valor. He was not braver probably than most of those on board, nor cared twopence more than they for the fate of the derelicts. His proposal was but the climax of his morning thoughts. He could endure himself no longer. The wretchedness of his passion would bear no further the thought of the girl he was on his way to meet. Every instant in the daytime, and night after night in his dreams, that splendid presence possessed him to which he had forever said good-by. And in the fever of that possession he could not think of a wife. Yet of what else could he think, as every hour brought her nearer, and made sharper for him the shame of her exultant face, and the reproach in her confiding arms. Never for an instant had his tenderness faltered. She was dearer to him than a sister; dearer by all she had given him, by all she was prepared to give; dearer above all by what she believed him to have given her.

And it was his tenderness that made unendurable the treachery of his faithfulness, the loyalty of the lie which was to make them one.

It was at the worst of such a reflection that death suddenly appeared to him as the escape, the release for them both; for the pledge which he had given and for her trust in his word.

Death, a high and honorable end, making a finish to his unprofitable life, leaving her with faith undimmed!

At that cold moment of his abasement there seemed nothing better. Given an hour to think it over and he would probably have recoiled from the sacrifice. There was even some measure of recoil in his mind as he went down the reeling ladder to his cabin, though there was no change in his determination. Death had ceased to look attractive; it was simply something for which, like a fool, he had let himself in. Yet under that was a dull indifference to what became of him.

He submitted to his oiling; then just as he was about to leave his cabin a re-

membrance came to him. He fumbled in his berth for the sovereign-case on his watch chain, opened it, slipped out a couple of gold pieces, took what looked like a wafer from beneath them, and put it into his mouth. The two men with him imagined the small gray disk to be some kind of sustaining lozenge. It was a tiny portrait of Laura Merton.

As he went shivering on deck Caragh made a wry mouth as his teeth met on the picture, and he imagined the suggestions its discovery would have offered to the woman he was to wed.

He had a hazy recollection afterward of the close and eager crowd which surrounded him as he fitted the clammy belt of the life-line about his body and climbed over the taffrail for a dive. It was a crowd warm with enthusiasm and admiration; with little to say, but with that in what it said which might have brought a blush to his whole body. But he heard nothing.

Then as the vessel lurched to starboard he let his body fall forward and shot down into the sea.

Before his head rose above the surface the cold water had changed his indifference to life into a disgust at his own temerity.

The ship heeled over as if about to impale him with her yards. Then he was lifted on the roller, and saw the wreck before him, looking much farther off than it had from the deck. He laid his course on a cliff to the south which the captain had given him to steer by, and turned over on his side. His left arm swung high and white out of the blue water, regular and unhurried as though he were bathing, and his head dipped under and was driven clear of the surface with every stroke. With his face thrown back he could see the dark skirting of spectators along the ship's side swinging into and out of the sky.

They were admiring in speech and in silence his courage and cool indifference to the occasion, and the humor of their admiration moved him as he thought of it almost to a laugh.

That he, with his despairs, his self-contempt, his growing disgust at his

foolhardiness, should appear to them as a heroic figure appealed to his keen sense of parody. What pretty reading in unconscious irony would the obituary paragraphs of his valor make for the gods of fate.

Yet valor of a sort he had, for it never once occurred to him to feign an inability to go farther, though the line he carried was beginning to retard him at every stroke.

The ship he had left was now lost to him in each trough of the waves; he could hear the break of the rollers over the reef, and saw that the tide had already drifted him to windward of the wreck. The roar in front increased as he proceeded, and at last he could see, as he rose, the waves thirty yards beyond him suddenly flatten, flinging up a veil of spray into the air. For a moment he hung irresolute; there, if ever a man might see it, was death visible before him. Then, with a curious sense of obliteration, his mind cleared. It seemed empty of thought or fear as the open sky above him; not a shred even of anticipation floated anywhere within it. He trod water as he gathered a dozen loops of the life-line in his hand, lest he should be hung up and dragged under by it when flung over the ledge. Then he went forward. A moment later, when the wave that had lifted him suddenly sank and smashed before him into a terrible welter of foam above the reef, his heart sank; but decision was past him. He knew that he was rising on the wave that followed, heard a strange crisp noise above him, and felt the crest dart forward like the head of a snake.

The next instant he was rolled up in the foam and flung onward like a whirling wheel. He lost his senses for a second from sheer giddiness, and found himself fighting for breath and the surface in almost quiet water, with the black sides of the wreck not fifty yards ahead.

The line was coiled about his body, but his limbs were free, and he seemed quite unhurt, and strangely unsurprised to be so, though but a moment back he had been prepared for destruction.

He was soon on the lee side of the

wreck, and after some little difficulty was hauled on board, being too weak to lift himself from the water.

He fell when set down upon the deck, and only then discovered that two of the bones in his left foot were broken, and that blood was draining from a gash nine inches long in his thigh. He also became aware that, unlike the *Candia*, the wreck carried a mixed cargo of humanity, and was amused even in his unhappy plight to notice that its immense relief and gratitude quite overruled any considerations of sex.

There was no surgeon on board, the saloons were a-wash; but the women tore up their petticoats to bind his wound, and, rolled in blankets from the deckhouse, he was made fast to the driest part of the poop.

There, drenched with spray and in a good deal of pain, he lay till evening, declining to use the means of safety he had provided till all but the captain and second mate had left the ship. The rigging up of a traveler had proved a difficult matter with the wreck heeling over as the tide left her, and the wind rising again after the ebb made all other means of communication impossible.

The captain was only got on board the *Candia* as darkness was falling, and Caragh had some salve for his hurts in the knowledge that the wreck slid off the reef and sank at high water before the next dawn.

He drew near Ballindra with sentiments a good deal modified by his adventure. Life had proved itself to be worth more to him than he had supposed, and sheer weakness from loss of blood as he lay bandaged on the sunny deck made the quiet certainty of a woman's love seem good in itself.

Sir Anthony had telegraphed a very picturesque account of the rescue, and owing to the *Candia* having to put back to land her new passengers Lettice had read the story before Caragh arrived.

There is, perhaps, no happier moment possible to a woman than that in which she hears the world applauding the man she loves and is about to marry.

To Lettice, so new to love and to a

near interest in any of the world's noises, the moment was almost overwhelming. It was a pain of happiness, a tense fear that such glad fortune could not endure. Caragh had sent her a wire, more kind than true, to say that he was mending splendidly, but she tortured herself with every sort of deplorable anticipation.

But she woke one morning to see the big liner, gay with flags, lying before her windows at the mouth of the river.

She dressed at a pace that left her maid staring, and took the steepest of short cuts to the slip. There, at that hour of the morning, not a soul was to be seen, so she hauled in the lightest of the moored boats and sculled herself down the river against the tide.

On the way the maiden modesty, which had so far been as breathless as every other part of her, found a word to say. For a moment the sculls stopped, and then dipped slowly to hold her against the tide.

Then the boat went ahead again, but more deliberately. While she was dressing, Lettice had forgotten every one in the world but herself and Maurice. Now, with the big ship before her, she remembered the others.

As she ran down to the slip she had thought of nothing but to get to him as soon as possible. Now there seemed a dozen things besides, all very important for a young lady.

But her doubts and fears were set at rest by a shout from the ship, and she looked over her shoulder to see Caragh standing by the flagpole waving his hat.

He was at the head of the gangway as she came up it, on a pair of improvised crutches, looking very white.

Sir Anthony, who was at his elbow, as radiant as herself, protested fussily at his imprudence, and walked them both over to the chart-house, which had been arranged for Caragh's use, where he left them to order breakfast.

Lettice, fastened to her seat by the windows around her, and dumb with happiness, could only gaze into Caragh's face. He looked back at her with a smile, which broke at last in laughter.

"You've heard all about it?" he asked.
"Oh, I should think I had!" she breathed.

"Comic, wasn't it?"

"Comic!" she repudiated, indignantly; "how *can* you?"

"I can't," he replied, ruefully; "it's comic only for me, and no one else will ever see it. Ah, but if you knew!"

"I do know," she exclaimed, imposingly, "and every one else knows that you were a hero."

"On Monday?" he queried.

"Yes," she said, proudly, "on Monday."

"Heroes were cheap on Monday," he explained with a whimsical sigh, "but I've been a hero when heroes were very, very dear."

She looked at him with the wistful misgiving which was always stirred by his half-serious banter. "I know a hero," she said, "who is very, very dear to-day."

He met the love in her eyes with such a tender appreciation that, disregarding the windows, she had half risen to kiss him, when the head steward entering, wrinkled with smiles and suffusing the joyousness of the occasion, set a breakfast tray between them.

He greeted Lettice with the custom of an old retainer, and commented on Caragh's health as though personally responsible for its condition.

"We're all that proud of him, miss, I can tell you," he said as he withdrew with the covers.

But his flattery was spoiled for Lettice by the appearance of a meal which declared the newness of the morning with such emphasis.

"Was it awful, coming at such an hour?" she begged of Caragh.

"Shocking," he said, unmoved; "five minutes earlier and you'd have found me in my bath."

"Oh!" she groaned; "I wish I'd waited for you on shore."

"In that case," he said, "I should probably have never landed."

"Never landed!"

"No," he went on; "I should have taken your absence for a sign that you couldn't goad yourself to meet me; that

you were cowering at home, dreading my arrival, and with your heart lost to a much lovelier young man."

"Oh, Maurice!"

"Yes," he continued; "I have never been able to believe that any woman's flighty little soul could be worthy of my own virgin and unchangeable affection."

"Maurice," she pleaded, "don't say things like that to-day; I want you to be quite serious and quite yourself."

"Heaven forbid!" he protested as he took her hand.

The chief engineer had devised a sling to lower Caragh into the boat; the purser had illuminated an inscription to him, signed by every one on board; there seemed to be innumerable hands to shake and good wishes to respond to before the boat was clear of the ship's side.

And then he had to wave his hat again and again to the cheers and shouts of farewell, Lettice sitting beside him burning like a rose.

But her hour came when she had him laid at last upon a sofa by his favorite window, and was kneeling on the floor beside him. Her mouth had been thirsting all day to kiss him, and when he leaned his head back and smiled at her she set her lips on his as though to drink from them.

"Oh, my darling," she murmured, lifting her face to look once more into his eyes, "you can't think what these last few days have been. It didn't seem possible that you could live and come back to me after doing all those splendid things. It was too much happiness for any one. And I was horrid and faithless, and felt sure you'd die. I ought to have known that God would take care of us, because you'd been so brave and loved me so."

Despite himself there was a tinge of pain and shame that showed on Caragh's face, and Lettice lifted her arm that had rested, ever so lightly, across his body.

"Did I hurt you, dear?" she questioned, anxiously.

"Oh, it's only just at first," was his ambiguous answer. But he drew her face toward him and kissed it again.

THE SONG OF ONE ASHORE

By Arthur Ketchum

EACH little wave of all the waves of the tumbling summer sea,
It seemed it had a silver voice and called the heart of me.
O must I wait, O must I stay, O must my heart be dumb,
When each wave has a voice to call and each voice bids me come?

Each shining sail of all the ships that move where sea meets sky,
It seemed to flash a welcome there as it went drifting by.
And must I linger here ashore when every gleaming wing
Has hailed me comrade as it passed and given welcoming?

It's fain I am to follow where the North broods low and gray,
Where headlands beetle black with storm, or icebergs bar the way
Or find in azure latitudes a sky that ever smiles,
And whiff the scents and see the palms of untrod Spanish isles.

For I've had speech with sailor folk who've seen these things and know,
And just beyond the harbor lights lies the blue way they go,
And just beyond the farthest rim—the last dim edge of sky—
The shores of Wonder bask in sun—the Magic Islands lie.

O well I know those harbor towns—turret and dome and spire,
They rise from dusky lines of palm against the sunset's fire,
Or huddle close about their lights all weather-worn and gray
While the tall ships whisper with the tide below them in the bay.

The noise of all the city like a great voice ebbs and swells,
But I can hear the boom of surf—the cry of far-off bells;
Along the crowding city ways the human tide drifts by,
But I can see the stately ships that move where sea meets sky.

O shining sails will you not pass and leave my heart in peace?
O little waves upon the shore will not your calling cease?
For every ship and every sail has a dear voice I know,
To call to me, to cry to me—and I am fain to go!

THE APOSTLE OF THE BUTTON

By Elizabeth Duer

I WAS on the Chicago Lightning flashing through Western New York when we pulled up at the Buffchester station.

The train was five minutes late and the conductor was examining his watch while a nervous jerking of his eyebrows proclaimed him a miser of those half seconds which his experience had discovered to be almost as useful in saving hours and lives as the proverbial pence in saving pounds. His thumb had given the snap to his watch and his other hand the signal to the engineer when a gentleman rushed to the steps of my car and pushed—rather than helped—a girl on board while he himself ran alongside the moving train in order to hand her her tickets and change.

I had been getting a breath of fresh air in the vestibule and I held the car door open for the young lady to enter.

"Good-by, popper," she called to the receding figure.

She was rather disheveled, poor child, by the scramble she had made to catch the train, and she must have torn her skirt from the band, for as she made a step forward she tripped over it and almost fell. The skirt had slipped far below the waist, showing a checked silk petticoat of rather attractive pattern. I am a neat person and always carry a pocket pincushion so that I was able to offer assistance.

"Torren out the hooks!" she exclaimed with an accent on her "r's" which made me shudder.

"Of course," I said. "They are most unreliable."

It fell in with her humor to apply characteristics to inanimate things, for

she laughed childishly and gave me her bag, ticket, and money to hold while she repaired damages by a series of jerks and hunches of her rather maturely developed figure.

The porter, who had preceded her with her long fur-lined cloak and her umbrella, now came back to see what was detaining her, and we all moved into the body of the car.

Behind the sheets of the Buffchester *Morning Herald* I observed my heroine, who had been accommodated with a chair exactly opposite my own, and very pleasant I found the study.

She was a large, young woman, with a cream and strawberry complexion and a halo of red-brown hair. Her eyes were also red-brown, and her nose and mouth were unformed and childish.

I am particular about clothes. Her's were neat enough, but without an atom of style, while her hat might have been "Made in Germany," it was so tasteless. Still as I said before, she was an attractive study and I pictured her to myself dressed—well—as my sister dresses—and I imagined the sensation she would make in my mother's box at the opera with that gorgeous coloring set off by an evening dress of pale green.

At this moment our eyes met; she also was studying me, and she was unpleasantly bold about it too. Every time I raised my eyes her red-brown orbs were fixed on my face till, man of the world though I am, I became embarrassed.

Did she admire me? I am five feet two inches and slight, with delicate features, a *retroussé* nose and a blond mustache.

There was no coquetry in her manner; she simply chose to stare.

Toward four o'clock we reached Albany, and I got out to see the new station our capital city is making such a boast of. Coming back in the noiseless way in which I always move, I saw the result of the young lady's study of my features. She was making a rapid sketch—must I say caricature—of me on the fly-leaf of her novel. There I stood, the attenuated dude! There was no mistaking the likeness, only it was *more so* everywhere.

She gave a frightened jump when she observed me and shut her book with a snap, while her pencil telescoped itself into a mere dangle from her watch-chain. She herself looked innocently out of the window at the Hudson River which flowed under the bridge we were crossing.

A man who had got in at Albany, probably a member of the Legislature (for the brand is unmistakable), walked through the car. He wore a shining silk hat and a fur overcoat with frogs, and as he passed my incognita a loop of his frog caught in a hook of her fur collarette which was hanging over the arm of her chair, and in a moment it was on its way to the smoking car.

With a bound I overtook him and reclaimed her property. I presented it to her with my best bow, though it would have served her right if I had let it go to ballywack!

She nodded her thanks rather indifferently, and addressed the animal's head on her fur.

"Look herre, Whiskerr," she said, "you stop by me or we'll parrt company for ever."

"Don't scold Whisker for the fault of a hook," I ventured.

Her color rose at the sound of my voice. I presume she felt guilty at having made fun of me secretly, but she answered:

"You seem to have a poor opinion of hooks."

"I have," I answered, "no man would put up with them."

She went off into a merry giggle.

"Popper doesn't like me to talk with strangers," she said.

"I should think he wouldn't much fancy your making pictures of them, either," I said, spitefully.

Once more she giggled.

"I meant to make a real nice picture, only somehow the pencil got silly. I'm sorry you saw it."

I bowed stiffly, and sat down.

As we plunged into the tunnel at the end of our journey I wondered what her destination might be and whether I should have any chance to offer my services, for in spite of the caricature I felt drawn to her, and I intently watched her preparations for arrival. The porter helped her into her jacket, and handed down the heavy cloak from its peg and she threw her collarette around her neck as carelessly as if Whisker's roving nature had never declared itself, and then she drew on her gloves without fastening the snaps.

Gloves with snaps! I shall wear buttons till I die.

The great Titan of a locomotive (number something in the big hundreds!) stood with its nose against the end platform of the Grand Central, and a grimy company of travelers streamed out of the train and dispersed as rapidly as a solid barrier of welcoming friends would let them.

My eyes first lit upon my mother's footman, and then upon my Sister Margaret, and then upon her maid. The family rarely made such an effort to receive me when I returned from my semi-yearly business trip to our copper mines in the Northwest, but it was eminently proper that they should, and I felt pleased, but puzzled to guess how they knew of my coming, which was earlier than I had announced.

To my surprise Margaret only nodded to me as she said:

"Hello, David, what brings you back so soon? I'm waiting for a girl who is coming to stay with us; Polly Parsons, from Buffchester."

"She's on board," I said, with conviction.

"How do you know?" Margaret re-

sponded, but did not wait for an answer as she was at that second enfolded in the exuberant embrace of Miss Polly Parsons.

When we were shut in the carriage Margaret introduced us formally.

"Miss Parsons, David," she said. "My brother seems to have guessed who you were before he knew you."

"I know some of his dislikes at all events," she answered. "He seems to be enlisted in a *warr* on hooks."

Margaret laughed.

"My mother and I are never allowed to wear them. We have buttons and buckles, and if those do not answer our clothes are laced, but no hook is allowed in 608 Knickerbocker Avenue."

"Then you better drive me right back to the depot," she said, "for I'm bristling with them."

"Perhaps we can convert you to other attachments," I said, with subtle courtesy.

It is not my purpose in this story to follow Miss Polly Parsons through the dissipations of a visit to New York in the height of the season. She and Margaret shopped all the morning and had engagements for every afternoon and evening, or as Miss Parsons would have expressed it: "They shopped mornings and went out nights." If you asked her whether she enjoyed so much gayety she would answer cautiously: "Well, some." Her English made my refined nerves quiver; indeed, it so offended my taste that I tried to steel myself against her beauty and warm, generous personality, but without success. The more she attracted me the more I felt the necessity of remodeling her upon the pattern of 608 Knickerbocker Avenue.

"Margaret," I said, "can't you pull that girl into shape and give her some hints in English, and throw the letter *r* back to Buffchester?"

She looked at me with amusement.

"Mamma and I have spoiled you, David. We have yielded to your whims till you want to cut down the whole world to our pattern. You cannot bring the great West to an English standard. Polly is a dear as she is."

"She would be dearer," I said, mimicking her accent, "if she were more particular."

"She is buying a great many pretty clothes," said Margaret, irrelevantly.

One day on coming down from my suite of rooms in the third story, I found my mother's door open, and her maid in the act of lifting a long coat for evening wear from a box and putting it on the bed. I stepped in to examine it, for I always pass judgment on the clothes my family wear before they are taken into use. The garment was faint blue, trimmed with chinchilla, and as it was too youthful for my mother, I felt sure it was intended for Margaret. The maid confirmed my opinion.

"That is a smart wrap," I said, passing my hand over the ample fur collar, when my fingers struck a gigantic hook at the neck, and upon examination I found the whole front was fastened in similar fashion.

This was Polly Parsons' influence! My mother and sister had been incited to rebellion by that bold hussy. I whipped my little silver penknife out of my pocket and, sitting down in the window, I began cutting out the hooks as carefully as I could, as a lesson to my womenkind that my rules were not to be thus lightly set aside.

I was so busy with the task that I heard no rustle of feminine skirts over the carpet, nor was I in the least prepared to have my knife twitched from my fingers into the blazing fire in the grate, and myself lifted from my chair by the coat collar and trotted, without ceremony, out of my own mother's room to the head of the stairs, where Miss Polly Parsons dismissed me with the one word "Scat!"

A blaze of red-brown eyes and flaming cheeks accompanied these extreme measures, but not another word escaped the lips of this Amazon of the West.

I felt hurt in my self-esteem, for I have a great deal of dignity for a small man, and my wishes are law to my mother and Margaret. The impertinence of this outsider coming here to insult me was not to be borne! I made

up my mind to say plainly to her that our house was not large enough for her and me at the same time, and then go to an hotel till her visit should be over.

I put on my goloshes as the pavements were slightly damp, and went for a short walk to settle my ideas before doing anything hasty, and on my return I met Miss Polly on the stairs.

"Mr. Griffin," she said, "I was awfully fresh just now, and I'm sure I beg your pardon; but it made me mad to catch you cutting up my new two hundred dollar coat, and I forgot my manners. Please forgive me."

"You were rather hasty, Miss Parsons," I said, stiffly. "My plan was to let the maid replace those hooks with ribbons or something tasteful."

"Well, they were *my* hooks, you see," she objected. "But let us call it quits," and she offered me her hand.

I laid mine reluctantly into it, and she gave it a squeeze that made my knuckles crack. How I disapproved of that girl, and how she fascinated me! She was so grandly alive, so indifferent to everything beyond first principles.

I found myself seeking her society at odd hours, and regretted her devotion to shopping. It did not suit her character to be forever thinking about her clothes. However, the result was charming—her beauty glowed more and more in the modern setting of French fashions.

One Saturday I had secured three seats at a matinée for a play I especially wished Miss Parsons and Margaret to see, and I strolled into the drawing-room toward one o'clock waiting the announcement of lunch. Margaret was warming her toes at the fire, and Miss Parsons was seated on a low ottoman close beside her. As I stood over her I saw—how shall I write it—I saw the back of her skirt was quite unhooked, at the placket (I believe it is called), and worse than that—no, I shall not write it; suffice it to say the display was such as no careful person could countenance. I felt outraged. It was not as if she were ignorant of my views. She knew them well enough, and I believe she did not care!

I went to the library, and, after dashing off a note to Margaret, I left the house. My note said:

"DEAR M.: Here are the tickets. You may be able to persuade my mother to take you, but I shall not stand sponsor for indecency in public places. You may feel reassured by a pin in Miss Parsons' placket, but I could not endure the anxiety through a long performance. D. G."

Well! they got there, and Miss Parsons rallied me at dinner about the sudden engagement which kept me from going with them to the play. She even hinted at there being a lady in the case—and—really she was a sensible sort of a girl!

Margaret told me afterward that when she was pinning her skirt together before they started for the theatre, Polly had expressed the hope that I had not noticed the incompetency of her hooks, it would never do to deal me such a trump card as that, she said.

That girl was beginning to learn, and I thought her language was moderating under the force of her surroundings, when she was summoned home by a slight indisposition of her mother.

The letter commanding her return came on Wednesday, and she was to shop and pack on Thursday, and start on her trip across the State Friday morning.

I sat alone with her for several hours on Wednesday evening, for my mother and Margaret were forced to keep an engagement they had made a month before. We talked quite sympathetically of manners and customs in New York and other cities, and she even let me take her mildly to task for some of her expressions. Her argument was that life was too short to pick and choose, and if you had become familiar with certain terms you made better picture-talk with them than with any old blooming dictionary phrases, and she meant to fire words out bang, just as she pleased.

Still she was alluring in the gentleness of her mood, and I think if she had not left me at ten o'clock I might have become sentimental.

The next morning when I was sipping

ping a cup of chocolate about noon—for I had not slept well, and did not always breakfast with the ladies—the butler came to say that the telephone had just rung us up, and that I was wanted at the police station.

I hastened to my mother to find out whether we had been robbed, or if a servant had been dismissed under suspicious circumstances, and finally I asked whether Margaret or Miss Parsons could throw any light upon so strange an occurrence. Margaret could not, it appeared, and Miss Parsons was out.

I sent for the carriage, and drove to the station in —— Street, where I promptly found the occasion of my summons. Miss Parsons had been shopping, and as the day was cold she had worn her long, fur-lined coat with hooks (not the blue one which I had docked of such fixtures, but the old original), and after turning over many expensive laces at Pound and Pence's she had made a small purchase, and after waiting for her change started out of the shop. The clerk, in returning his valuable lace collars to the box, missed two of the most costly, and his report to the detective they employed led to Miss Parsons being stopped at the door, and asked to go for a moment to the desk as there was something wrong with her bill. She innocently acceded to the request, and when she found herself in

a private room she was asked to submit to a search, and there, hanging from the hooks of her cloak, were the two collars!

Explanations were offered by her in her distress, but the case seemed too plain, and she was quickly conveyed to the police station, and there told she might summon her friends.

Sobbing and angry, she nearly fell upon my neck when I arrived, and it only took a few minutes to establish my own identity, and satisfy the sergeant at the desk that the thief was a hook and the young lady quite innocent.

As we drove home the silence was only broken by a sob now and then from Polly. I felt such an object lesson might well be allowed to soak in; it needed no rubbing. But the sight of her distress was too much for me. I took her hand, and said gently:

"Dear Polly, now that we think so entirely alike on most points, suppose we agree to adopt each other's views for life—even on the subject of hooks."

She dried her tears and said, with a suspicion of merriment in her voice:

"But then you would expect me never to become unhooked!"

"Not from me," I said, gallantly.

"Well, you see, Mr. Griffin," she answered, "I am engaged to a man called Sheppard up the State, and I only came down to buy my *trousseau*, so I guess I'll have to button on to him first."



THE VICTOR

WHAT have I lost, that I should mourn?
Tho' I should fall, and bleed again,
And see again my visions torn,
And touch again the hands of pain,

And ride once more with grim defeat,
And taste all toil of land and sea.
What tryst have I with failure, Sweet,
Since you have taught me victory?

THEODORE ROBERTS.

THE WOMAN IN THE CASE

By Allan P. Ames

"ANY of you fellows lost a watch?" inquired Willard.

Mounting the steps of the veranda, he exhibited his find to a group of youngsters industriously clouding the mountain air with their after-dinner cigars.

Each man instantly felt for the pocket where his own timepiece rested.

"No, it isn't mine," they answered. "Let's see what it looks like."

The watch passed from hand to hand was a gold repeater of heavy, old-fashioned design, without chain or fob.

"Where'd you pick it up, Jerry?"

"Out here in front of the hotel. Right after dinner I went down to the wharf to see the steamer off, and on the way back I saw this shining in the grass. Pretty handsome, isn't it? The owner will be mighty glad to get it back."

"Never saw such a one on any acquaintance of mine," said Austin Roberts as he delivered it to his next neighbor. "Anybody who has a watch like that and neglects to put his name on deserves to lose it."

"What an idiot I am?" said Jerry. "I didn't think to open it. Jimmie, look and see if there's anything engraved inside the case."

Jimmie did as suggested.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "I should say there was something inside."

"Let's see," said the others, leaning toward him.

But Jimmie snapped the case in their curious faces.

"Here, Jerry," he said, "you found it; take care of it. I resign all responsibility."

"Why, what's the matter?" inquired the finder as the watch was handed over. "What did you see?"

"Look for yourself. Far be it from me to pry into such secrets."

"But it's my duty to look. I may find a clew to the owner," responded Willard as his thumb hovered above the lever.

"Go ahead, then. It isn't mine, anyway."

Thus admonished, Jerry touched the spring and the case flew back.

"H—m!" he sniffed. "Only a girl's picture. After the fuss Jimmie made I expected to find the Pope's encyclical, or a message from the President. Nice looking girl, though," he added, holding the watch out over the railing to get the full benefit of the waning summer light. "Any of you know who she is?"

Again the timepiece traveled around the group. "A stunner," "a regular queen," was the unanimous verdict.

"Bet the fellow who lost this is half frantic by this time," said Roberts. "If a girl like that put her photo in my watch I'd have it chained and riveted to me."

Willard seated himself comfortably on the railing with his heels hooked over the lower rail and lit a cigarette. After a few ruminative puffs:

"This complicates matters considerably," he observed. "Now if it really belongs to any of you here, don't be afraid to own up. It's none of our business who the lady is, and I guess we will know enough to keep our mouths shut."

All made hasty denial, while several exhibited their own watches as evidence.

"Each proves an alibi," said Jenison. "You'd better leave it with the clerk. It must belong to somebody in the hotel or one of the cottages."

"What! that swivel-eyed lady-killer!" said Jerry. "Not much! Perhaps the girl is staying here too. She'd dote on having that Willy showing this around; wouldn't she? If it were mine I'd rather never see it again than have it on exhibition at the desk."

"That's right," said Roberts. "The least we can do for the fellow is to hunt him up and return it quietly."

"That reminds me of a good thing that happened at Lakewood last winter," began Jenison.

Willard quickly disengaged his heels and stood up—Jenison's stories were pretty much of a kind—"I believe I'll nose around and see if I don't hear something," he remarked, metonymically, and strolled away, leaving a wake of fragrant smoke.

A distaste for Jenison's narratives was not his only reason for departure. A brief, unsatisfactory view of the picture had so piqued his curiosity that he wanted to get it indoors to a better light. As he threaded his way among the lazily gay groups on the long veranda his eyes sought every feminine face with unconscious scrutiny. He knew them all; not one bore resemblance to that in the watch. Most of those who spent the early summer at this mountain lake resort were old acquaintances who returned year after year. More than one maiden nodded an invitation to tarry as Jerry loitered near; and even the late comers showed no resentment of his searching glances.

He found the main lobby brilliantly lighted as usual, but empty, except for the clerk and two women receiving his most deferential attention. Willard had advanced but a few steps from the entrance, when, with final directions in which he caught the words "breakfast" and "trunks," the ladies turned and came toward him. They passed without a look, which was a lucky thing for Jerry. The clerk, however, surveyed his attitude and snickered. The hateful sound recalled the young man to his senses, and restraining a longing to punch the clerk's curly head, he walked on into the writing room.

The man behind the register attrib-

uted Jerry's actions to the wrong cause entirely. He believed it just an ordinary case of failure to attract the attention of a pretty stranger. But then he had no way of knowing that the fair unknown was the original of the photograph. In spite of the difference between a black and white card and blooming girlhood in diaphanous summer drapery, there could be no doubt of it. Finding himself alone, Jerry opened the watch and examined the contents carefully.

The occupant smiled up at him with disconcerting intimacy, as if she appreciated an exquisite joke on the real girl. It made Jerry feel as though he were taking a liberty. Clearly he had no rights with a strange young lady's photograph. But what else could he do? Undoubtedly the girl could name the rightful owner, but she might find the situation embarrassing. In short, Jerry confessed himself unequal to the explanation that would have to precede. He pictured himself approaching with a "Pardon me, miss, but I have here a watch which I wish you would restore to the owner, or divulge the owner's name so that I may return it myself. I know you can, because your picture is inside. You're the 'woman in the case'—ha, ha!" No, indeed, that wouldn't do at all. The man in the case would come looking for him with a gun, and the girl would be his enemy forever. He emphatically preferred to be friends with a girl like her.

After some cogitation he adopted a simpler plan. The woman being discovered, the man might be expected to reveal himself very shortly. It was preposterous to suppose that he could keep away.

"I couldn't," reflected Jerry as he snapped the watch shut and returned it to his pocket. Manifestly there was only one thing to do—watch the girl. It was not so swift a method as a direct appeal, but infinitely more delicate and amusing. What was the chief end of a man's vacation, but amusement? When he had reasoned this out, Jerry felt well pleased with himself. The plan was attractive, and there was no

reason why he should not put it into immediate execution.

The girl, with the older woman, whom from certain resemblances he took to be her mother, had gone in the direction of the ballroom. Thither then he followed and paused at the doorway to enjoy the gay scene there presented.

It was the regular weekly hop, and disheveled pompadours and starchless collars bore witness to the enthusiasm with which the younger generation was participating. Presently his attention was drawn to the antics of several college youths surrounding a gentleman of irreproachable dress and bearing near the door. Willard recognized the object of their attentions as one who occupied one of the most difficult and important offices on the hotel staff. His duties were purely social. He made the newcomers feel at home; and few picnics, cotillions, golf or tennis tournaments, or organized pleasures of any kind were not dependent upon his energy and skill. Ostensibly, his days were an endless round of pleasure.

But just now he was hard beset.

"Oh, come on, Williams, that's a good fellow; you promised to present me next," clamored a youth in a flannel suit.

"Get out, Eddie; you aren't fit to be seen. The young lady expressly requested to meet me," asserted his neighbor in a natty dinner coat.

"Aw, by the time you've danced three times around you'll be a rag," said the first speaker, making a pass at the other's alabaster shirt front.

"Williams, you really *must* take me up," insisted a third. "She promised me the next, if I would only get myself properly introduced."

"You're a cheerful liar, Ollie. We saw you making eyes at her. She wouldn't look at you."

"Aw, you're out of this entirely," retorted Ollie. "Retire to the side lines before she catches sight of your strawberry nose. Don't notice him, Williams; his sunburn has struck in."

"Hush," whispered the dignified Williams; "here she comes."

Willard followed the direction of several pairs of masculine eyes and was not surprised to find that their target was the girl who had passed him in the lobby. He was hardly prepared, however, to see her with Austin Roberts. Austin wore an air of exasperating self-satisfaction and seemed to enjoy his astonishment hugely. "He's recognized her, too," decided Willard.

It was insufferably presumptuous on Austin's part. Jerry felt that his rights of discovery had been unjustly ignored, but lost no time in claiming them. Realizing the futility of seeking aid from the harassed Williams, he gained his end by other means. Not far away sat the elderly lady whom he believed to be the girl's mother; and close beside her in intimate conversation he recognized his good friend, Mrs. Hidorn. He strolled over and stood behind Mrs. Hidorn's chair.

Presently she discovered him, and two minutes later he had met her neighbor, Mrs. Havens, and bent his energies to winning her favor. In this line Jerry's best was very good indeed. His reward was swift and satisfactory. Mrs. Havens had hardly finished with one branch of his family when the music stopped and Roberts and his partner approached their corner.

"Mr. Willard, you must meet my daughter. Laura, this is Mr. Willard."

Gray eyes looked into his black ones with the smiling frankness that constituted the picture's greatest charm. He also liked the contrast between the ruddy brown of her cheeks and the ivory whiteness of her arms and shoulders—and the way in which her brown hair rose so smoothly about the sides and back of her head to the culminating pompadour—and her way of shaking hands. In fact, there was nothing about her he didn't like—unless it was Austin Roberts.

The objection to Roberts arose from his failure to appreciate the proprieties of the situation. Having finished the dance, he should have retired. Instead, he stayed and butted into the conversation with unblushing persistence. A dreadful supposition leaped upon Jerry.

Roberts might be the man—the owner of the watch; his conduct on the veranda might have been only a blind! Anxiously Jerry applied a test:

"Austin, may I trouble you for the time?"

"Ten minutes of nine," answered his friend, promptly hauling out his chronometer.

"Thanks, old man," was said so fervently that Roberts was enlightened. Laura Havens was speaking to Mrs. Hidorn, and he turned to Jerry with a grin of complete sympathy as he said: "You're a bright boy; called my bluff very neatly. If you find him, send for me and we'll carry him out and chuck him into the lake together. Don't suppose you want to let me carry the watch for a while, do you?"

"Clear out," ordered Willard. "You've had your chance. Give somebody else a show."

"All right," responded Roberts, good-naturedly. "But be quick. Here comes Williams with the gang at his heels. There's the music. Hurry up."

Then he proved himself a friend and a brother by accosting Williams and holding him in conversation until Jerry had obtained the dance and whirled Miss Havens away with a precipitation that almost carried her off her feet. Arriving just too late, Williams looked intensely relieved; but his persecutors scowled their disappointment.

Miss Havens bore an ocular fusillade of unparalleled concentration with an unconsciousness that commanded Jerry's respectful admiration, while it subdued his longing to return and bang their empty heads together. He had never seen the youngsters behave quite so badly. Miss Havens' beauty was not a sufficient explanation. He could account for it only by the conclusion that they knew about the photograph.

"If I had the right she has given him," meditated Jerry, for the twentieth time pressing his elbow against the watch to make sure of its safety, "if I had his drag, I wouldn't be capering up and down a hot room on a night like this. I'd have her out on the lake where these rubber-necks couldn't trouble us.

I do hate to see a man so sure of a girl that he doesn't even care whom she dances with. I'd resent it, if I were the girl. Anyway, she shows no signs of pining for his presence. Confound it! The music's going to quit. I wonder if she'll go out on the veranda with me? One never knows how to take these engaged girls."

However, when the dance ended, the disposition of the enemy's forces led him to adopt unexpected tactics. A couple of his rivals had improved their time by getting acquainted with Mrs. Havens, while the rest, with Williams still among them, occupied a strategic position at the door through which he would have to pass if he attempted to go outside. Both detachments were taken back to behold him lead his partner through the only other doorway into a little reception-room adjoining. Usage and tradition had established the principle that a couple taking refuge in this room wished to be let alone. Confident of being undisturbed, here Jerry found chairs and began the vigorous use of her fan.

In reviewing the events of that evening he gave this same fan most of the credit for what followed. If it had not slipped out of his hand he would not have stooped to pick it up, and had he not stooped the watch would have remained hidden in his waistcoat pocket. When he heard the thing thump on the rug he reached for it quite calmly, thinking it was his own. But before he touched it an exclamation from his companion showed him his mistake.

"Why, how queer!" said she; "I didn't know there was another watch like it in the world. Won't you let me see it, Mr. Willard. It is just like my father's."

"Your father's!" Jerry straightened up with a jerk; his fingers closed over the timepiece as if to conceal it. "Why, of course," he resumed, swiftly recovering himself. "That's what I brought you in here to speak of. Fact is, this watch *is* your father's. At least I sincerely hope so. I found it out on the lawn this evening."

"You could tell very easily whose it

was by looking inside," observed Miss Havens.

"But I did look."

"Then why have you any doubt about it?"

"Pretty stupid, wasn't it? I ought to have known," replied Jerry, joyfully.

"I don't quite comprehend," said the girl. "You say you saw his name engraved inside the case and still wasn't sure. Oh, you mean you didn't know that 'Richard L. Havens' was my father. I believe his name is given that way."

As she spoke she took the watch from his half-paralyzed grasp and opened the back.

"Why—ee!" she cried, with a glance of surprise. "My picture! I didn't know the dear old fellow carried it here. It covers the name all up. No wonder we didn't understand each other. Now I see; you knew it was his watch because you recognized my photograph."

"Y—yes," stammered Jerry; "that's it. It is a very good picture."

"Only a faded kodak. I've lots of better ones."

"Oh, have you? That's fine. Then it would be no trouble to replace this."

"Replace it?"

"Yes," continued Jerry, with a hardihood that amazed him, "I expect a reward, you know, for resisting such a terrible temptation. Suppose I had kept it, who would have known?"

"Mr. Willard, you're joking. Didn't you just say that you brought me here purposely to return the watch?"

"Oh, I don't mean the watch," said Jerry, scornfully.

For a moment he saw the balances of Fate tremble. In spite of the heat he felt a tendency to shiver. But suddenly she smiled and the chill vanished.

"Why, of course, if you really want it," she replied, heartily. "You certainly deserve some reward. Father will be so glad to get his watch back. It's a very old one he thinks a great deal of." As she spoke she removed the circular piece of paper from inside the case and handed it to Jerry. The way she did it made the favor seem quite the usual thing.

"This is cut out of a group that was

taken in the woods last summer," she continued. "Perhaps you would like the whole picture better."

"Oh no, I shouldn't dare ask for a whole one," he assured her. "I'm tremendously obliged for this much."

From the other room came the babel of many voices and the sound of stringed instruments being tuned. In the doorway a couple of sophomores were conversing with the freedom of self-confident adolescence, their unabashed tones rising above the confusion of noises beyond:

"Yes, old fellow, you bet she's a queen. Deuced pity she's engaged."

"Engaged! Well, I fold on that! How do you know?"

"Oh, it's all over the place by this time. Do you mean to say you haven't heard about Jerry Willard's—?"

Jerry turned hastily to the girl beside him.

"We are losing a lot, staying indoors on a night like this," said he. "The moon is up by this time; won't you let me take you out in my canoe?"

"Nothing I should like better," answered Miss Havens. "But you must let me help you paddle."

On the way to his rooms that night Willard encountered Austin Roberts.

"Find who the man was?" inquired Roberts.

"Yes," replied Jerry, starting up the stairs.

"Who is he?"

"Well, really, Austin, I don't feel at liberty to divulge a secret of such importance and delicacy. I did it once to-night, but I've learned better since."

"Pon my honor, Jerry, I never told a soul," protested Roberts. "Didn't I do you a good turn to-night?"

"That's right; you did," said Willard, pausing. "Well, I'll tell you this much. He isn't her *fiancé*."

"Not engaged!"

"No," answered Jerry; "the man who carries Miss Havens' photograph isn't actually engaged to her; but that needn't make any difference to you, my boy. Because," he concluded, doggedly, "he's soon going to be."

THE BREAD OF DECEIT

By E. F. Benson

Author of "Dodo," "The Vintage," "Mammon & Co.," Etc.

IT was a very hot afternoon, and the great gray house with blinds drawn down to keep out the sun had winked and dozed since lunch time without showing any signs of life or tenancy.

A broad flagged terrace, with two flights of steps leading onto the lawn below ran down the south side of it, and the languid breeze which from time to time stirred and was still again, sent the air which had been grilling on the sun-baked stones into the open windows of the house in warm, dry gusts.

Out of sight somewhere a mowing machine ticked its regular way down its close-shaven track, and the bees droned drowsily in the flower beds, making midsummer audible. Midsummer was audible, too, in the gay sounds from the hay-fields below the lawn, which was already half cut, and even now falling in fragrant swathe of flower and ripened grasses. Yet in spite of the industry there, the silent house and the silence of the skies, where in the west thunderclouds were gathering with promise of dispersal of this torrid heat, suggested a sense of pause, not the pause of something accomplished, but the gathering stillness portending something that should come.

Certainly a glance into the billiard-room of this house of Lord Smarden's would have indorsed this suggestion of pause.

A young man of great length of limb disposed angularly over an armchair was dozing undisguisedly over his book, and not far from him a woman, who, to judge by appearances, wanted to be young also, was wondering why she

could not doze as contentedly over hers. In fact, the sight of this peaceful tranquillity on the part of her companion seemed rather to irritate her, and before long she shut up her book with a bang. This action, designed to wake him, did not fail of its purpose.

"Yes, that was why I did it," she said. "It is odious manners, Jack, to sleep in front of some one who can't sleep; you might as well eat a large dinner in front of a starving man. What a hideous afternoon! And where is everybody?"

Jack did not exhibit the slightest sign of annoyance.

"I don't know where anybody is," he said, "and I agree about the afternoon. Is that all you awoke me for? If so, I'll——"

Mrs. Montgomery got up from her chair.

"No, it wasn't all," she said, "but now you have made me forget what the rest was."

"In that case——" began Jack again.

"In that case you will wait till I remember," she said. "Now what was it? I know I wanted to speak to you about something you said at lunch."

"There is a pleasantly wide field of conjecture before you," he said.

"There is. I never heard any one talk so much. Ah, now I remember. Dueling. How on earth could you be so awkward as even to mention the word dueling in this house? To Lady Smarden, too!"

Jack opened his eyes a little more.

"Why on earth not?" he asked.

Mrs. Montgomery sighed impatiently.

"Oh, dear, I suppose you weren't

born," she said. "How detestably young, young men are."

"They get over it; I am getting over it myself. Being young is like the measles, you only suffer from it while you are young. I beg your pardon—"

"Yes, and then you become middle-aged," said this outraged lady. "That is a shade worse."

Jack considered this a moment.

"Don't you think you are rather hard to please?" he said. "What is one to do? One can't be certain of turning gray in a single night. In any case don't be so discursive. Why should I not mention dueling to Lady Smarden?"

Mrs. Montgomery opened her hands with a little gesture of despair.

"Hopelessly young," she said again. "Or is it really so long ago? Yes, I suppose it is twenty years. How frightful!"

"Terrible! But what is twenty years?"

"The famous Harrington case. Mr. Harrington was staying with the Smardens in Scotland when it happened, and he—died. So was a certain Mr. Ellison, Mr. Evelyn Ellison whom I knew slightly. He was tried for the murder of Mr. Harrington; the verdict was brought in non-proven, and he disappeared. He has not been heard of since as far as I know. But I always wonder—"

She paused, drumming with her fingers on the edge of the billiard table.

"What has all this to do with the impropriety of my mentioning duels to Lady Smarden?" asked Jack.

"Well, it can't be very pleasant to have your guests shooting each other all over the place, and being non-proven afterward," said Mrs. Montgomery with some asperity. "At least that is not my idea of a successful house party."

"Oh, it was a duel? You didn't say that."

"You might have guessed. Two shots were heard in the middle of the night, and the next day the body of Mr. Harrington was found in the middle of a hay-field."

"And a housemaid deposed to seeing two solitary figures cross the lawn shortly before the shots were heard," said Jack; "and one solitary figure—that of the prisoner—crossed the lawn shortly after. And an almanac is brought into court to prove that there was a moon."

"Just so," remarked Mrs. Montgomery. "It was a scullery maid on this occasion, but the principle is the same. Also she couldn't swear to the identity of the one solitary figure."

"I didn't know such things ever really happened," said Jack, after a pause. "It all sounds like a shilling shocker."

"It was shocking."

Jack looked at her rather intently a moment.

"That is not all," he said. "*Au dessous* is written in your eye. What is the *au dessous*? And what quarrel had Evelyn Ellison with the corpse? And who was the corpse?"

"Mr. Harrington? Oh, nobody in particular," said Mrs. Montgomery; "just like everybody else. He had proposed to Lady Smarden and been refused. But that was no distinction. There were hosts of them, I assure you. My husband was among them, after he met me, too. We used to call them the legion of honor."

"And what was the quarrel?" Jack repeated.

"Well, you see it had always been supposed that Lady Smarden was going to marry Mr. Ellison till she showed us that we were all wrong by marrying Lord Smarden. And Mr. Harrington was certainly in love with her. And certainly she was very fond of Mr. Ellison. Those are the data. It looked as if Mr. Harrington had insulted him in some way. He was a coarse, violent sort of man."

"And the usual conjecture was made as to what the insult was?" asked Jack.

"Just so."

Jack paused a moment.

"By the way, how is Lord Smarden this afternoon?" he asked.

"Rather better, I believe. But it is very awkward being in the house while he is ill. I shall go to-morrow morn-

ing. In fact I think we are all going to-morrow."

This outline of the case which Mrs. Montgomery, a woman of not more than ordinary veracity, had given to Jack Ormiston with remarkable correctness was one which twenty years ago had roused the most enormous and excited interest throughout England.

Lady Smarden, then a girl of about twenty, over whose beauty and wit the whole of London had gone wild, had married her present husband two years before, a man some twenty years older than herself, contrary, as Mrs. Montgomery had said, to the expectations of the world in general. Undoubtedly the marriage was a brilliant one for her; at one step, so to speak, she had skipped from a country parsonage to the very topmost rung of the social ladder. And no one, it was allowed on all sides, was better fitted to be the wife of the head of one of the greatest English families.

All the same—here again Mrs. Montgomery was pedantically exact—every one fully expected that she would marry Evelyn Ellison. She did not, however, do anything of the kind, and, as it was her business and not the world's, the world, of course, talked about nothing else for a week or two, and then dropped the subject.

Two years later, however, it resumed it again, for the Smarden marriage had distinctly failed of success. A daughter had been born, and it was known that the two parents had had a violent difference over the question of the religion in which she should be brought up, Lord Smarden being a Roman Catholic, his wife a Protestant. Day by day after that the breach had widened, till the two, so it was said, hardly spoke to each other. Their houses, however, were always full, which made the want of intimacy less glaring and more easy. And among those who came there were often members of that band which Mrs. Montgomery had alluded to as the legion of honor, the most assiduous being Mr. Harrington and Evelyn Ellison.

One August, while they were in Scotland, occurred that tragic affair which she had just given in outline to Jack

Ormiston. Evelyn Ellison had been seen by some belated domestic to leave his room late at night, and an hour afterward two shots were heard not far from the house. In the morning came the discovery of Mr. Harrington's body, shot through the heart.

Eventually Evelyn Ellison was tried for the murder; he had put in no alibi, had refused to say where he was at the time and had merely pleaded not guilty. Certain discrepancies of evidence, though the case looked black enough against him, had saved him from being condemned to death, and the verdict in Scotch law was brought in non-proven. Then he disappeared; it was rumored that he had left the country; it was rumored that he had joined some religious house; it was rumored that he had committed suicide. All, however, that was known for certain was that nothing was known for certain, nor had the chances and accidents of twenty years added to or subtracted anything from the knowledge.

Occasionally as to-day, when some *maladroit* allusion made in ignorance again aroused that sleeping scandal, the story would pass once more the lips of some one who had known about it, but in the main the whole thing was forgotten. Lord and Lady Smarden were still noted for their brilliant unconsciousness of each other, and the magnificence of their entertaining. Their houses were always full; all that wealth, rank and good breeding could command was theirs, and the conduct of the host and hostess to each other when by themselves—which rarely happened—did not concern the guests who flocked to their parties.

For the last six months, however, Lord Smarden had been very far from well, and he had now known for some weeks past that he was suffering from a somewhat dangerous affection of the heart. He might, it is true, live for many years yet, but if he wished to do so, he must largely give up the activities of life and spare himself as far as possible all mental worry and excitement. When first his own state was made known to him, the news had been a

great shock, but the lapse of weeks had accustomed him to the knowledge, and by degrees he had somewhat relaxed from the strict *régime* laid down for him with apparently no ill results.

An unpleasant reminder, however, had come to him when, three days before, he had been thrown from a horse ordinarily quiet, on the very day on which the house party now with them had assembled. With a natural aversion to invalidizing himself he had persevered for two days with a host's duties, but the night before he had fainted suddenly during dinner, and passed a night of excruciating pain. He had kept his room all day, particularly desiring that the party should not be broken up, but now, owing to the doctor's absolute refusal to take any responsibility if he exerted himself at all or left his bed, it had been settled that the guests should leave next morning. During the afternoon the doctor had made a second visit, and having again examined him, was at the present moment talking to Lady Smarden.

It was indeed no wonder that at twenty she had turned the heads of more than the *jeunesse*, and even now, when she had already passed her fortieth year, her beauty was a thing to wonder at. Her face was still as smooth and un wrinkled as a girl's, it still preserved the exquisite softness and bloom of youth; only her hair, which lay thickly coiled on her head, was perfectly white. Her long neck crowned by that small and beautifully proportioned head, made her appear even taller than she was, and as she stood by the fireplace talking to the square little doctor, her long black eyelashes nearly brushed her cheek as she looked at him.

"Undoubtedly Lord Smarden is very dangerously ill," said he, "or perhaps it would be more precise, to say that he is in danger of being so. The least emotion or excitement may bring on another attack as bad as the one he had last night. He might—conceivably—be able to pull through another."

Lady Smarden pointed the little doctor to a chair and herself sat down.

"Thank you for telling me, Dr. Thax-

ter," she said, "you mean——" and for a moment her voice stumbled in her throat.

"Yes, I mean that, my dear lady," said he. "I can only guard against the probability of another attack."

She was silent a moment.

"Did you tell him?" she asked.

"Yes. I do not think it was news to him. I think he guessed how ill he was. But if he is kept quite quiet, he will certainly get stronger; there is no essential reason why he should not be nearly as well as before this attack. But a shock of any kind would probably kill him. Undoubtedly the fall from his horse brought this on, though even then it might have been saved if he had gone straight to bed and remained there."

The dry precision of his words was intentional, but in his kind little heart Dr. Thaxter felt immensely sorry for the beautiful, proud woman.

"Then you can do nothing?" she asked.

"I can only prescribe complete rest for body and mind. He must be spared all anxiety and worry. Worry is especially bad for him. By the way, Lady Smarden, speaking of that——"

She leaned forward as he spoke with a brisk, attentive movement.

"Yes?" she said.

"Lord Smarden expressed this morning a desire to see a priest of his church, and make his confession," he said. "At first I somewhat dissuaded him, for all exertion and excitement, as I told you, is bad for him. But on thinking it over, I was inclined to believe that he has something on his mind, and I came to the conclusion that it would be better to let him have his way about it. It worries him; I wish to avoid that."

Lady Smarden got up, her brow knitted into a sudden frown.

"A priest?" she said. "He wishes to confess?"

"Yes. I suggested that for the sake of his peace of mind he should tell you whatever he wants to say, and delay his formal confession till he is stronger, but he was very urgent about it, and I saw clearly that my hesitation about allow-

ing it worried him considerably. Seeing that, I gave way, for the possible ill effect which the exertion of confessing may have on him seems to me to be less bad for him than thwarting his desire. In fact, as I came here this afternoon, I called at St. Catherine's College, asking that a priest be sent at once."

Dr. Thaxter looked up as he finished, and saw that Lady Smarden's face had grown strangely rigid and tense, disturbing and distorting her beauty even as a stone flung into a pond shatters the reflections. But she answered him at once,

"Surely it would be very bad for my husband," she said. "I hope you will reconsider it, Dr. Thaxter. You told me any excitement was bad for him."

"I think the excitement, if there is any, is less likely to be harmful than the worry which my continued refusal would have given him."

Again a wave of some deep-seated anxiety swept over her face.

"Ah, I am certain you are wrong about it," she said.

The doctor was puzzled.

"Lady Smarden," said he, "if you knew what it was that your husband wished to confess, and would assure me—"

"No, I know nothing," she answered, interrupting him. "But I beg you—"

She broke off, as a footman entered.

"Father Hastings is here, my lady," he said, "to see his lordship."

"Ask him to wait a moment."

Then, when the man had left the room:

"I beg you to reconsider this," she said to the doctor. "I think it will be very bad for my husband."

Dr. Thaxter shook his head.

"His anxiety and worry when I at first refused was very bad for him," he said. "He would, I am sure, have continued to worry about it. But I am delighted they have sent Father Hastings. I know him slightly; a thoroughly gentle and wise man, one who has seen trouble too, himself, I should say. Would you like to see him first?"

"No, no," said she. "What should I

see him for? You are determined, then?"

"I am acting to the best of my ability."

"Please wait, then, till it is over," said she, "and see that my husband has not suffered in consequence. Father Hastings had better see him at once."

It was but a couple of minutes later when the priest was shown up into Lord Smarden's room. The windows had been darkened with blinds and curtains to keep out the hot sunlight, and it was some seconds before he could make out the outlines of the furniture. The bed where Lord Smarden lay was away from the light, and as soon as his eyes had got sufficiently accustomed to the gloom the priest came straight across and knelt by it.

"Lord Smarden," he said, "before you make me your confession I want you to remember in whose presence we are. Think of me not as a man, but just as a channel of God's forgiveness, and open your heart not to me, but to Him. Oh, do not be ashamed or afraid. He knows already all you will say, all you have done. Come to Him as a child to a father, to say you are sorry."

From the bed there came a slight movement as if in impatience or the fretfulness of illness. But the voice that answered him was quite calm.

"It is very good of you to have come so soon, Father Hastings," said Lord Smarden, "and I am afraid in a way that I sent for you under false pretenses. For I want to tell you for my own relief of mind—what I shall tell you, and I sent for you, a priest, because by your profession you can keep a secret as surely as other men cannot. Also, I am a Roman Catholic—" he paused a moment, "at least I cannot remember becoming anything else. And please," he added, with the sudden nervous fretfulness of sickness, "please do not kneel there. It fidgets me."

Father Hastings arose.

"Of course I will hear you," he said. "That is the least I can do for you."

"That is the most," said the other. "I only want to make a statement to a man who can keep a secret. For I do not suppose I am truly penitent. You will see."

But the might and power of his priesthood was strong in the man, and he could not without a struggle let a soul go unforgiven.

"Oh, there is yet time," he said. "Shall we not plead together before the throne of infinite compassion? The door stands ever open, and on the threshold there is One who stretches out hands that have bled for you, in whose heart there beats all the sorrows of the world. On Him are all the sins of the world laid and that burden is His glory. Will you not seek Him? Has He bled in vain?"

There was silence, and as the darkness of the room became less dim to his more accustomed eyes, the priest could see the gaunt face of the man who lay in bed, looking horribly white and drawn from those hours of pain, as if the skin had been stretched like a drum over the bones. But his appeal had sounded in deaf ears; Lord Smarden waited politely till he had finished, that was all.

"I ask if I may tell you this just as man to man," he said. "Pray sit down."

The priest made a gesture of assent, and Lord Smarden shifted himself slightly in bed, so that he faced him. Sitting, as Father Hastings did, with his back to what little light filtered in through the closed curtains, he was to the other no more than a black blot against the grayness.

"I am much obliged to you," said Lord Smarden, "and I will try not to task your patience. I am afraid, however, I must inflict a little family history on you, and I must begin at the beginning."

Again he paused, fumbling feebly at the pillows. The priest arose, and with a deft hand placed them where he wanted them. Then he sat down again, waiting.

"It's twenty-two years since I married," said the other. "My wife was

quite a girl at the time and the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. Probably you have heard of her, perhaps you have seen her. She married me, I think, because she was ambitious. I do not think she loved me. But I loved her beauty."

The priest stopped him.

"Pray introduce other names as little as possible," he said.

"Certain names are necessary," said Lord Smarden. "You will see why. There were many men in love with her, two are concerned with my confession. One is—is dead. The other, for all I know, is dead also. The name of the one was Harrington; the name of the other was Evelyn Ellison. You may have heard of them."

"I have heard of both of them," said the low, even voice from the chair.

"It is not unlikely. The papers were full of those names at one time, at the time, in fact, of which I shall speak. Two years after my marriage they were both staying with us in Scotland. They arrived, I remember, on a Friday evening. On the Sunday following I had a violent quarrel with my wife. I accused her, in a sudden fit of jealousy, for which I had no definite grounds, of being far too intimate with Ellison."

A knock came at the door, and the nurse entered noiselessly and pulled aside the curtains, letting the soft level light of evening into the room. The sun was already low and a cool breeze stole in. Lord Smarden waited in silence with closed eyes till she had left the room again.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I think I could speak to you more easily if you sat where I could not see you. What I have to say is rather difficult."

The priest gently moved aside behind the head of the bed. Watching him more closely one could have seen that his hands trembled, and his lower lip was white from the pressure of his teeth.

"She never forgave me," went on Lord Smarden, "nor has she yet forgiven me. The same evening Harrington, a guest of mine, you will remember, insulted her and me to my face in an

intolerable manner, in a manner to which there could be but one answer. He said to me what I had said to my wife that morning. He wondered at my complaisance. My guest said that."

There was a short pause; the sick man's voice for the moment had risen suddenly shrill and angry, and the priest with a quick, nervous movement, brought his chair a little closer to the bed.

"Yes, Lord Smarden," he said, "I understand; I understand perfectly. Let me beg you to go on."

"To that sort of insult I knew of one answer only," he said. "There was a bright moon, and we fought not far from the house. I heard his bullet sing by me. He, I suppose, heard nothing. And the madness of red blood must have touched my brain, for I left him lying there, and came home in a frenzy of exaltation, for not only had I killed that foul slander, so it seemed to me, but I had killed the man who had uttered it. There is no place on this earth for so vile a liar."

Again there was silence, and the bed-clothes rustled as Lord Smarden again shifted his position, so that he looked away from the window, and away from the side of the bed, close to which the priest was again sitting.

"There was an inquest," he went on, "and it was established beyond doubt that it was a case of murder, not suicide. Good God, we were close enough to each other when we fired; they might have brought it in as suicide. Then, the same day, Evelyn Ellison was arrested."

Lord Smarden paused again, for the exertion of talking had made him out of breath, and with a feeble hand he wiped the cold dew from his forehead. But he went on again; his voice, which had hitherto trembled and faltered, was strong.

"Then it was," said he, "that the legions of hell took possession of me. My life was forfeit if I gave myself up, and I clung to it. I could not give myself up, though if Ellison had been condemned to death I should have. And these same legions of hell whispered to me: 'He—Evelyn Ellison, was not in

his room when the shots were fired; he had been seen to leave it. Where was he, then? What if Harrington had spoken the truth? Where was he?'"

The priest arose and came close to him.

"And where is he, Henry?" he said.

For a long time the two looked at each other in dead silence.

"So you know me," said Father Hastings.

But Lord Smarden did not answer. His eyes brightened, grew wide, recognized and grew dim again. He sank back from the half-sitting attitude into which he had raised himself.

Then the divinely human compassion for suffering touched the other, even though the sufferer was he who had wrecked his life, and by his silence had let the stigma of that verdict brand him before all men.

"There, old man," he said, "lie quiet. Shall I get you anything? Don't speak just yet. Henry, I'm awfully sorry to see you like this."

But Lord Smarden again raised himself.

"Why did you not put in an alibi?" he said. "Every day I have asked myself that. Where were you? Could you have put in an alibi? Oh, infamy! Could she have said where you were? Answer me, man, or I will kill you as I killed Harrington!"

He sprang up in bed, then tottered and fell across it full length.

Father Hastings sprang to the bell, and rang peal on peal. Steps hurried outside, and Dr. Thaxter ran in. The priest merely pointed to the figure on the bed.

The doctor went to him and put his finger on where the pulse should be. Then he took from its case an ether syringe. By this time a white-faced footman was standing in the doorway.

"Bring, bring, you understand, Lady Smarden!" he said. Then, turning to the priest: "When did this happen?"

"A minute ago. We had an agitating talk. He sprang up in bed and fell—there. Is he dead?"

The doctor did not answer at once,

for he was waiting to see if the heart responded to the ether.

"No, he is not dead," he said, at length. "He may die any moment. He may, on the other hand, rally completely.

Just then Lord Smarden stirred and opened his eyes.

"Ah, Dr. Thaxter," he said, "just go away. Where is—where is Father Hastings?"

The priest knelt by the bedside, and the dying man, already beyond words, groped blindly for his hand. For a moment the waxy fingers pressed those of

the priest, then the pressure relaxed and the head fell sideways.

At the moment Lady Smarden entered.

"What is the matter, Dr. Thaxter?" she cried, and her eyes fell on the figure on the bed, and on him who knelt beside it.

The doctor went to her.

"Come, my dear lady," he said.

But Lady Smarden was not looking at him, nor at the figure of her husband, but at the priest. Slowly he raised his eyes to her.

"Yes, Helen, I," he said.



IN A PALM ROOM

IT happened in a minute; there was really nothing in it
 Though it caused a lot of gossip that was neither here nor there;
 Just a stroll on the piazza where a fellow surely has a
 Right to take a girl when others have the corner on the stair!

'Twas a pause between the dances, and her soft, beseeching glances
 Seemed to plead for some unspoken word he long had wished to say,
 Underneath her curling lashes came electric little flashes,
 And he led her through the window to the palm-grown primrose way.

They were turning round a corner; there was no one there to warn her,
 And he called her kind attention to a distant twinkling star.
 With her face beside his shoulder, eyes uplifted, he grew bolder,
 And—well, this was just the matter gave her chaperone a jar!

They never knew who listened while that star above them glistened,
 And her face for one long moment was embedded in his chest.
 But 'twas this way,—'tis a fact I can assure you!—There were cacti
 But a naughty rubber-plant was growing there among the rest!

KATE MASTERSON.

STILL IN COMMAND

By Beatrice Hanscom

WARE leaned his folded arms on the breakfast table, and stared moodily across the room.

"Good-morning to you," said Jimmy Brent, gayly, from the doorway, with a burlesque of the elaborate infantile bow which accompanies that polite introductory song of the modern kindergarten.

Ware's face cleared.

"Come in, old man," he said, genially. "Aren't you carrying a little more sail on that smile of yours than usual?"

"If that smile could show how I feel inside," said Jimmy, impressively, "people would beg me on their bended knees to tell them how I did it, and I could make a fortune telling them to rub something in the corners, using a rotary motion with a gentle outward pressure of the finger tips. Just like the General Loveliness department in the daily press. Ever read it? It's great. Gets a column a day of despairing inquiries from people who're afraid their fair young beauty is on the wane and what shall they do! Girl wrote the other day," he said, with a chuckle, "that she wanted her jaw made smaller. That was all. Just that. Dead easy, wasn't it? They told her," he went on, appreciatively, "that box-plaited jaws would be confined to the prize ring this season; none of the first families were wearing them, and they hinted that there were cases where the ax was mightier than the press."

His laugh was contagious.

"That's much better," he said, approvingly. "Now that you look pleasant enough, so there's no danger of breaking the camera, I'll tell you the news. Jessie and I—Jessie and I," he

repeated, with an evident heartfelt enjoyment of the phrase, "are engaged."

"Good work, old man," said Ware, heartily, "you're in luck. How did Mrs. Van take it?" he inquired.

"We broke it as gently as possible to my future mother-in-law," said Jimmy, coolly, "on account of the fewness of my worldly goods. Fireworks! Jessie and little James watched them prettily. Then she decided to play the graceful loser, and she's making the record in it. Man alive!" he said, exultantly, "I'm living in Arcady!"

"If there's anything Arcadian about old Manhattan, I'd like to see it," said Ware, moodily. "It hasn't happened to me. I seem to be popularly regarded as a mere vermiform appendix to my own money, with a surgical operation very strongly advised. I'm heartily sick of it."

"I've as sweet a disposition as any one, but all the same I don't like to be done," murmured Jimmy, amiably.

"Precisely," said Ware, grimly.

"Too-much-moneytus is your complaint," said Jimmy, musingly. "Everybody got a remedy to suggest. Absolutely sure cure." He glanced at Ware critically.

"Coffee cup always shake like that on the way up?" he inquired, interestingly. "You aren't off the Banks, you know. Why aren't you eating something stylish in the way of peacocks' tongues, anyway? What's the use of having all your money and then trifling with the humble egg?"

"Life is a confounded bore," said Ware, slowly, and his tone was tired. He pushed his chair back from the

table and lighted a cigarette. "Jimmy," he said, confidentially, "I've been thinking of getting married myself."

"Being in love can't agree with you," commented Jimmy, sarcastically.

"No love about it," said Ware, tersely.

"Accident or design," inquired Jimmy, cautiously.

"It's designed to prevent accidents," said Ware, and his jaw squared a bit.

"The Pursuit of the Eligible," mused Jimmy, "gives a nice idea of The Lives of the Hunted, doesn't it?"

Ware's shoulders stirred impatiently.

"Oh, I'm cynic enough," he said, bitterly. "You see I've been viewing the worship of the Golden Calf from the point of view of the calf for some time now, and it shows the world in mighty queer perspective. But, after all, isn't it better to marry in your own class and settle down? Carleton Hurd's death has upset me a bit. You knew it?" he said.

Jimmy nodded. "Saw the bulletin as I came down," he said.

"I used to think Hurd was the luckiest dog living," said Ware, slowly. "He led things here with a high hand four or five years ago. He was the richest bachelor and the handsomest, and he had only to pick and choose. But he prided himself on living open-eyed. He lived royally—entertained lavishly.

"He sent for me to go out and see him last week. That big country place of his—lonesome, ye gods! Hurd in an armchair, under the trees, like Cyrano, gaunt, death-stricken. It gave me the horrors.

"Ware," he said, when I left, "it's ill business, dying with only a pack of servants. Don't make my mistake. Marry any woman in your own class that's got pride. They'll stick by."

"I got the telegram this morning. He died in the night, alone."

He sat still for a second. Then he turned to Jimmy, impatiently. "Talk of something cheerful, for Heaven's sake, man," he said.

"Well, you let up on your funerals, then," said Jimmy, genially. "If you

want to reflect on something happy and beautiful, think of me."

He glanced at the clock, and got out of his chair leisurely.

"Sun up, man," he said, briskly. "If you can't decide whether to bestow that lovely hand of yours on some one or not, you might punch the bag with it for a while. Air and exercise is what you need. Now say good-by to little James prettily. He is going to Maillard's to meet the one and only Genuine Girl."

Gazing rapturously at an imaginary bride, he whistled the Lohengrin March with immense vigor and marched out of the room with a dignity of demeanor which it was fair to surmise he would not achieve at the altar itself.

Ware looked after him with an odd expression.

"I've an idea I'll try it myself," he said. "I'm sick of the free lance business. Why not make it a business proposition?"

He fell to thinking of sundry young women. One by one they turned out to be entirely unsatisfactory.

Marrying for money or a good old family name was obviously carrying coals to Newcastle; witty women wanted you to laugh all the time; the beauties demanded constant adoration, which was exhausting to supply and humiliating to ward off; as for the devotees of bridge, he had been the victim of enough odd little accidents in the score to make him feel that he didn't care to marry the possibility of an adapted baccarat scandal.

He shook himself free of the whole thing.

"No use," he said. "I'd rather take Jimmy's advice," and he disappeared into his dressing-room.

Five minutes later he emerged, clear-eyed and undeniably warm.

"Great remedy for the blues," he said, genially, fanning himself with the morning paper.

A familiar name caught his eye, and he read the paragraph with interest.

"Mrs. Grahame and Miss Katherine Grahame, who arrived on the *Deutschland* yesterday, will keep their town

house open until June 1st, when they will go to their country place, The Birches, for the summer."

So the Grahames were back after their long absence. Katherine was probably as title-hungry as all the rest.

If Europe hadn't spoiled her, it might not be a bad idea to go down and open up Willow Brook for a few weeks. In his boyhood days its chief recommendation had been that it was near The Birches. For Katherine had been a stanch ally, who took almost as intelligent interest in sport as though she had been a boy. He remembered her teaching the Boston terrier's puppies to sit up solemnly in a row in answer to the question: "Who likes beans?" He remembered her as instructing him in canoe-craft, and being really helpful when he took her sailing; and most vividly he remembered her, standing white-lipped but clear-eyed, with a wrist badly twisted from a fall on the treacherously slippery stones at the landing. "I won't cry. It's just like a girl," she had said, as she set her teeth. "And you needn't come. I don't want you." And she had marched away in a soldierly way that he had admired. He had been desperately afraid of girls who cried. They expected you to pet them. Horrors!

Then he had caught the fever to be a man of the world, and he had swung around a course more than slightly spectacular. His father's death had closed Willow Brook; he had voted the country slow, and spent his summers on the yacht. The Grahames had become globe-trotters. But he would really like to see Katherine again, and on the impulse of the moment he promptly called her up by 'phone.

The telephone, which only the day before he had designated as an unmitigated nuisance, showed a forgiving spirit and produced Katherine promptly.

"Come out, by all means, Tony," she said, with a frank friendliness, singularly unchanged. "I'm going to ride at four, but I'll be in at three. Yes, it's good to be back. I could have hugged the Liberty if she hadn't been such an armful. Good-by. I shall expect you," and she rang off.

Ware was used to carrying on telephone conversations of a decidedly lingering order. This businesslike proceeding left him looking rather blank. Then his countenance assumed a very cheerful grin.

"It sounds promising," he said.

"Of course we are going to spend the whole summer at The Birches," said Katherine, decidedly. "That was why I came home. I'm going to enjoy every inch of it. The woods, the river, the country roads. Will you be at Willow Brook?"

"When I'm sent home from The Birches I shall," said Ware, with lazy gallantry, "not otherwise. May I suggest that my Panhard goes well on those country roads?"

Katherine shook her head gayly.

"Nothing so civilized and lazy," she said. "I'll race you across country, if you think you can manage a horse, or I'll arrange to spill you out of a canoe and see you do a daring rescue of us both, if you like. You'd best prepare for a strenuous summer or stay away."

She smiled at him in a frank way which struck him as singularly attractive.

Ware found that he was having a decidedly good time. She had not kept him waiting. She had come into the room immediately, looking very stunning in her habit, and she had greeted him with a friendliness on which no shadow of coquetry impinged.

She was sophisticated without being spoiled, and animated without effort, and she rang delightfully true. Jimmy's romance seemed suddenly vapid and poor old Hurd's advice unpleasantly cold-blooded.

Comradeship was the thing. And Jove! that was what a man better marry for. Suddenly it occurred to him as the only rational, the only desirable, thing. It would be great. That's what it would be. And he would do it, too.

"Katherine," he said, impulsively, "I wish you'd marry me. I believe we could have an awfully jolly life together."

His tone suggested a pleasant en-

thusiasm. It was not in the least lover-like.

A shadow passed over Katherine's face.

"Are you feeling feverish," she said, and her tone was cool.

"No, I'm not," said Ware, indignantly.

"My dear Tony," she said, "that isn't the kind of a question that drops out of a clear sky. Perhaps you'd better supply some of the connecting links."

They possessed suddenly an unsuspected capacity for being awkward to state.

"See here, Katherine," he said, "neither you nor I are sentimental. We see life sanely. We could be splendid chums."

"Isn't that rather a slight ground for marriage?" she said, simply.

"No," he said, stoutly, defending his guns, "I don't think it is. I think it's the best ground of all. Marriages of convenience are too cold-blooded. That's why they are apt to turn out badly. Marriages of love are marriages of inconvenience, or disillusion. They're too warm-blooded. Comradeship is square, and sane, and healthy. Don't you think you'd like to try it?" he said, and he bent forward persuasively.

Her laugh rang out with a mirth of whose genuineness he had no doubts.

"I'll try the comradeship," she said, gayly, "all the comradeship you like, but no matrimony. We'll see how the comradeship plan works."

"It will work all right," said Ware, decidedly. "I'll just give up some time to proving that to you. It will beat love any day, eight up and one to play."

"You can begin by coming out to see my new horse," said Katherine, plainly unimpressed. "I've ordered him around at four, and he hasn't learned to stand."

"Looks like an ugly brute," said Ware, as the chestnut proceeded to demonstrate the truth of Katherine's last remark.

"He's been ridden with a bad bit, and it's enough to spoil any one's disposition," said Katherine, promptly. "He'll be all right now. Will you put me up?"

She swung into the saddle to look as though she had always been there.

"I'd ask you to dine with us to-night, but we're going to the Catherwood's," she said, and she smiled again in the way that Ware had found so attractive before.

"You're going to lunch with me tomorrow," he said, steadily. "Ask your mother what time I can call for you both, and 'phone me, will you?—and then I am going to ride with you later in the day," he announced.

She looked distinctly amused.

"You're an energetic young person," she said, but her tone was acquiescent.

"I'm going to be," he stated, authoritatively.

She nodded pleasantly as the chestnut lunged impatiently forward, and was off.

The groom, getting into his saddle like an exceptionally well-jointed automaton, wore even a wooden expression, but as he trotted down the street the natural man inside permitted himself the luxury of thought.

"Oh, he is, is he!" he commented, with a relish, and belonging to a class where social relations are conducted on broad and simple lines, he indulged in a low chuckle which could be promptly converted into a cough if necessary.

Jimmy Brent, running into Ware an hour later at the club, was surprised to find that young gentleman in the most buoyant spirits.

"How fit you look! What have you been doing?" he demanded.

"Following your advice, old man," said Ware, amiably. "Going to take a lot of exercise now."

Jimmy eyed him critically.

"H'm," he said, and his tone was unconvinced.

Ware was honestly surprised at the way the days went by.

Also at the number of pleasant things there were to do in New York. That is, if you did them with a really congenial person. He even found teas endurable, and dinners, if the hostess knew enough to give you the right per-

son to take in, were much shorter than usual. It was wonderful how he never got out of conversation with Katherine, and how prone he was to think of things, after he had left her, which he wished he had said. Comradeship was great.

The Capitoline was saved by a goose, and Ware was undeceived by a window-curtain, by which we learn, dear children, the customary lesson.

He sauntered into the Grahame's at twilight one warm spring afternoon and found Katherine in the library.

"You didn't go to the Carter's?" he inquired, and his tone suggested surprise.

"I told you that I had sent my regards this morning," she said. "Was it pleasant?"

"So you did," said Ware, amiably. "That must have been the reason I didn't go. How comfortable you are here. It's pretty hot outside."

Katherine crossed over to the open window.

"I'm tired of houses," she said. "I think I must be country-hungry."

Ware walked over and stood by her.

"It will be fine this summer, won't it?" he said, satisfactorily.

It was at this point that the window-curtain decided that it was time to give him a hint.

It swung out into the room two or three times, experimentally, and then enveloped Katherine gracefully.

"How do you think she looks in a veil?" it inquired as plainly as possible.

She put up her arms to disengage herself, but the curtain clung obstinately to the comb in her hair.

Ware bent over to help her, and succeeded in making the tangle much worse, so that by the time she had wrench'd herself loose the great golden coils were in a picturesque disorder.

She moved away with a somewhat flushed face, though her voice was not quite steady. "I'm afraid it's past repair," she said, smilingly; "I shall have to send you home, Tony. It's late, and you ought to go, anyway. There goes the hall door now," and she made a precipitate exit.

Ware, left unceremoniously alone, stood looking at the curtain with unseeing eyes. The tresses of golden hair had sent a wonderful tingling through his fingers as he had striven to release them, and something indescribably sweet had set his pulses pounding.

"Bless you!" he said rapturously to the curtain, and he strode out into the hall just in time to meet Mrs. Grahame.

"Going, Tony?" she said. "Hasn't it been sultry! People who entertain this weather are a public nuisance. I'm going in to tell Katherine how wise she was to stay at home."

He smiled upon her effulgently.

"She's not here," he said, and his tone was joyous. "She's gone upstairs. She had a—a—window-curtain," he explained, pleasantly, and, still smiling, he took his departure.

Mrs. Grahame looked after him severely.

"It's no wonder Katherine left him," she said. "He ought to have known better than to come out here in such a state. When a man doesn't know a headache from a window-curtain he's pretty far gone."

With which unjust accusation she went up the stairs. To Ware's mood of rapture succeeded an intense desire to get through the rest of the day; and it dragged diabolically.

He dined with his richest and most eccentric aunt, an annual penance which she exacted, and she gave him a cold-water dinner and enough good advice to drive any man to a consistent course of wickedness.

He went to Brotherton's supper to his ushers, and developed a morose melancholy which made Brotherton wonder if his bride-to-be had ever rejected Ware, a suspicion which strengthened his confidence in the genuineness of the young lady's affection and increased the kindness of his manner toward the unconscious Ware.

That taciturn young man went to bed at five, after having impressed energetically on his man's mind that he was to be wakened in time to keep an engage-

ment to ride at ten; and he woke every half-hour for fear that Walters, who had never failed in any detail of his duty for seven years, should allow him to oversleep.

The morning was perfect.

It was impossible to believe that the park had ever before shown such freshness in its tender shades of green.

Great purple globes of wistaria swung in the breeze, and brought to Ware's mind the glory of a certain Venetian spring-time when he had been there as a little chap, with a firm ambition to grow up and be a gondolier.

That these were the same roads over which he had ridden with cynical reflections, that there had ever before been such a wealth of sunshine, that the air, intoxicating and buoyant, was not wafted straight from Arcadia, was clearly incredible.

Katherine was radiantly alive, with a poise to her head and shoulders like a Greek victory, and in the deeper violet of her blue eyes, Ware exulted hopefully.

They talked in trivialities, yet nothing was trivial.

Each word was as pregnant with the primeval story as the song of the bird to his mate.

As they came out of the Fifty-ninth Street entrance, Ware swung around in his saddle exultantly.

"Jove!" he said, "that was Siegfried's own wood. Do you remember what he learned in it, Brunhilde?"

She turned to him laughingly.

"Call up your dragon," she said; and as if in answer, the fire-dragon sent them peril.

For there was a rumble, and a crash, and excited cries; and around the corner, with two wheels in the air, swung a hook and ladder truck with its horses plainly unmanageable, while the driver, hatless and with his coat split up the back, still kept his seat and sawed steadily on the reins.

The chestnut caught the contagion of fear, and, plunging after the truck, ran alongside.

Ware, turning sharply in pursuit, saw him rear again and again, throwing

himself so straight in the air that it seemed that he must fall backward.

Terror is the keenest spur of all. It gave impetus to the chestnut, against which Ware's horse, obediently putting forth his best efforts, could make no headway.

Bending forward in the saddle, as if to lift them both along, Ware could see that Katherine was riding with a poise which argued self-possession, though with every plunge the chestnut made he turned sick with the possibility of disaster.

Farther up the street a new mansion was being added to Millionaire's Row.

The street was narrowed to half its width by piles of brick and beds of mortar.

The lunging truck and the plunging horse could not pass there together. The only hope of safety lay with the truck-driver. Could he get his horses under control? He sat, a tensely strained figure, silhouetted distinctly against the blue sky. Cool-headed, patiently, slowly, he regained command of his horses. From the plunging run they came to a gallop; then, as they steadied, the chestnut lost his frenzy; and, as the truck came to a standstill, he, too, stopped and stood, dripping wet and worn out.

Ware pressed his horse alongside.

"Are you all right?" he demanded, anxiously.

"Talk about Brunhilde," she said, and she smiled at him undauntedly; "her horse had wings. I feel more like *la belle Americaine*."

"Hi, there!" the truck driver called to them, "I've got to wheel here. Don't let that horse bolt again! You can ride like the whole show, miss," he said, with intense approbation.

"That's the way you drive," she answered, laughingly.

He grinned as he swung the truck around and was off at breakneck speed down the avenue.

Ware's hand went out to the chestnut's bit as the truck horses wheeled.

"Oh, you manage your own horse, Tony," she laughed, holding her reins steadily.

Then they turned homeward.

Ware's first feeling of relief came when he lifted her from her horse. She walked rather stiffly.

"I feel like Stephen after he'd been stoned for a bit," she said, as they went in.

She tossed her gloves on the library table, and extracted the pins from her hat.

"Your dragon was a great success, Siegfried," she said, amusedly, though her lips were white.

Ware came over to her and took her in his arms as though he never meant to let her go.

"I've got you safe," he said; "I've got you safe. I vowed that was all I'd ask for when I saw that beast throw himself in the air. But it isn't, Katherine," his voice sank to a tone, powerful, caressing, passionate. "Give me your heart, girl," he said. "Love me."

"Is this comradeship?" said a stifled voice, with a ripple of amusement.

"It is *not*," said Ware, emphatically.

"I thought it beat love eight up and one to play," she murmured.

"You didn't," said Ware, defiantly. "No one ever did. I never heard of such a thing in my life."

He bent over a face pressed firmly against his coat.

"Would you mind looking up a minute?" he said, persuasively. There was no response.

"You are going to marry me this summer," he began. "The wedding will take place at The Birches. It is going to be a love-match. Heavens! to think Jimmy Brent imagines he is in love! He doesn't know anything about it. Not the first principles. Nobody ever did. This is the very first case. I intend spending the rest of my life dem-

onstrating that to you satisfactorily. Do you understand that thoroughly?" he demanded.

"I think I do," said a voice with a distinctly spurious meekness. "I'll tell you why, if you like, though I'm sure it won't be good for you. I found it out some time ago."

"You did, did you!" he said, severely. "Why didn't you tell me about it? How are we ever going to make up that lost time?" and he held her firmly away so that he could see her face.

A wonderful color stained her cheeks. Then, slowly and bewilderingly, the long lashes swept back from eyes like violets, dewy and dazzling. He saw the most marvelous things in the world in their depths. Then the old familiar look of amusement came back.

"Don't you dare," he said, and he shook her gently. "You'll have to make it up to me," he whispered, "for years, and years, and years." He drew her to him gently. His whole world focused in the sweet, flushed face with the dewy, scarlet mouth that pouted adorably. It drew his heartstrings irresistibly into the shape of Cupid's bow.

Then he blotted the curves of that sweet mouth against his own.

The curtain at the window waved to and fro in mirthful satisfaction.

"*Vive l'amour!*" it said, gayly, for it was a French curtain. It flirted itself lasciadly at them.

From the ceiling a diminutive archer, clad rather insufficiently in a rose-colored cloud, gazed at them complacently.

"Who said the bow-and-arrow regiments were out of date, and I was retired from active service?" he said, airily. "There's just as many of the first families in my ranks as there ever were."



LILIMUM TIGRINUM

WHEN first I called her "lily," I referred to that pure kind, So white, so calm, so beautiful, so gentle and refined; But since we wed and have at times a wordy little row, To me she really seems more like a tiger lily now.

NIXON WATERMAN.

CONFessions OF A HUMORIST

THERE was a painless stage of incubation that lasted twenty-five years, and then it broke out on me, and people said I was It.

But they called it humor instead of measles.

The employees in the store bought a silver inkstand for the senior partner on his fiftieth birthday. We crowded into his private office to present it.

I had been selected for spokesman, and I made a little speech that I had been preparing for a week.

It made a hit. It was full of puns and epigrams and funny twists that brought down the house (which was a very solid one in the wholesale hardware line). Old Marlowe himself actually grinned, and the employees took their cue and roared.

My reputation as a humorist dates from half-past nine o'clock on that morning.

For weeks afterward my fellow clerks fanned the flame of my self-esteem. One by one they came to me, saying what an awfully clever speech that was, old man, and carefully explained to me the point of each one of my jokes.

Gradually I found that I was expected to keep it up. Others might speak sanely on business matters and the day's topics, but from me something gamesome and airy was required.

I was expected to crack jokes about the crockery and lighten up the granite ware with *persiflage*. I was second bookkeeper, and if I failed to show up a balance-sheet without something comic about the footings or could find no cause for laughter in an invoice of plows, the other clerks were disappointed.

By degrees my fame spread, and I became a local "character." Our town was small enough to make this possible.

The daily newspaper often quoted my sayings. At social gatherings I was indispensable.

I believe I did possess considerable wit and a facility for quick and spontaneous repartee. This gift I cultivated and improved by practice. And the nature of it was kindly and genial, not running to sarcasm or offending others. People began to smile when they saw me coming, and by the time we had met I generally had the word ready to broaden the smile into a laugh.

I had married early. We had a charming boy of three and a girl of five. Naturally, we lived in a vine-covered cottage, and were happy. My salary as bookkeeper in the hardware concern kept at a distance those ills attendant upon superfluous wealth.

At sundry times I had written out a few jokes and conceits that I considered peculiarly happy, and had sent them to certain periodicals that print such things. All of them had been instantly accepted. Several of the editors had written to request further contributions.

One day I received a letter from the editor of a famous weekly publication. He suggested that I submit to him a humorous composition to fill a column of space; hinting that he would make it a regular feature of each issue if the work proved satisfactory. I did so, and at the end of two weeks he offered to make a contract with me for a year at a figure that was considerably higher than the amount paid me by the hardware firm.

I was filled with delight. My wife already crowned me in her mind with the imperishable evergreens of literary success. We had lobster croquettes and a bottle of blackberry wine for supper that night. Here was the chance to lib-

erate myself from drudgery. I talked over the matter very seriously with Louisa. We agreed that I must resign my place at the store and devote myself to humor.

I resigned. My fellow clerks gave me a farewell banquet. The speech I made there coruscated. It was printed in full by the *Gazette*. The next morning I awoke and looked at the clock.

"Late, by George!" I exclaimed, and grabbed for my clothes. Louisa reminded me that I was no longer a slave to hardware and contractors' supplies. I was now a professional humorist.

After breakfast she proudly led me to the little room off the kitchen. Dear girl! There was my table and chair, writing pad, ink and pipe tray. And all the author's trappings—the celery stand full of fresh roses and honeysuckle, last year's calendar on the wall, the dictionary, and a little bag of chocolates to nibble between inspirations. Dear girl!

I sat me to work. The wall paper is patterned with arabesques or odalisks or—perhaps—it is trapezoids. Upon one of the figures I fixed my eyes. I believed me of humor.

A voice startled me—Louisa's voice. "If you aren't too busy, dear," it said, "come to dinner."

I looked at my watch. Yes, five hours had been gathered in by the grim scythingman. I went to dinner.

"You mustn't work too hard at first," said Louisa. "Goëthe—or was it Napoleon?—said five hours a day is enough for mental labor. Couldn't you take me and the children to the woods this afternoon?"

"I am a little tired," I admitted. So we went to the woods.

But I soon got the swing of it. Within a month I was turning out copy as regular as shipments of hardware.

And I had success. My column in the weekly made some stir, and I was referred to in a gossipy way by the critics as something fresh in the line of humorists. I augmented my income considerably by contributing to other publications.

I picked up the tricks of the trade. I could take a funny idea and make a two-

line joke of it, earning a dollar. With false whiskers on, it would serve up cold as a quatrain, doubling its producing value. By turning the skirt and adding a ruffle of rhyme you would hardly recognize it as *vers de société* with neatly shod feet and a fashion plate illustration.

I began to save up money, and we had new carpets and a parlor organ. My townspeople began to look upon me as a citizen of some consequence instead of the merry trifler I had been when I clerked in the hardware store.

After five or six months the spontaneity seemed to depart from my humor. Quips and droll sayings no longer fell carelessly from my lips. I was sometimes hard run for material. I found myself listening to catch available ideas from the conversation of my friends. Sometimes I chewed my pencil and gazed at the wall paper for hours trying to build up some gay little bubble of unstudied fun.

And then I became a harpy, a Moloch, a Jonah, a vampire to my acquaintances. Anxious, haggard, greedy, I stood among them like a veritable killjoy. Let a bright saying, a witty comparison, a piquant phrase fall from their lips and I was after it like a hound springing upon a bone. I dared not trust my memory; but, turning aside guiltily and meanly I would make a note of it in my ever-present memorandum book or upon my cuff for my own future use.

My friends regarded me in sorrow and wonder. I was not the same man. Where once I had furnished them entertainment and jollity, I now preyed upon them. No jests from me ever bid for their smiles now. They were too precious. I could not afford to dispense gratuitously the means of my livelihood.

I was a lugubrious fox praising the singing of my friends, the crows, that they might drop from their beaks the morsels of wit that I coveted.

Nearly every one began to avoid me. I even forgot how to smile, not even paying that much for the sayings I appropriated.

No persons, places, times or subjects

were exempt from my plundering in search of material. Even in church my demoralized fancy went hunting among the solemn aisles and pillars for spoil.

Did the minister give out the long-meter doxology, at once I began: "Doxology—sockdology—sockdolager—meter—meet her."

The sermon ran through my mental sieve, its precepts filtering unheeded, could I but glean a suggestion of a pun or a *bon mot*. The solemnest anthems of the choir were but an accompaniment to my thoughts as I conceived new changes to ring upon the ancient comicalities concerning the jealousies of soprano, tenor and basso.

My own home became a hunting ground. My wife is a singularly feminine creature, candid, sympathetic and impulsive. Once her conversation was my delight, and her ideas a source of unfailing pleasure. Now I worked her. She was a gold mine of those amusing but lovable inconsistencies that distinguish the female mind.

I began to market those pearls of wisdom and humor that should have enriched only the sacred precincts of home. With devilish cunning I encouraged her to talk. Unsuspecting, she laid her heart bare. Upon the cold, conspicuous, common, printed page I offered it to the public gaze.

A literary Judas, I kissed her and betrayed her. For pieces of silver I dressed her sweet confidences in the pantalettes and frills of folly and made them dance in the market place.

Dear Louisa! Of nights I have bent over her, cruel as a wolf above a tender lamb, hearkening even to her soft words murmured in sleep, hoping to catch an idea for my next day's grind. There is worse to come.

God help me! Next my fangs were buried deep in the neck of the fugitive sayings of my little children.

Guy and Viola were two bright fountains of childish, quaint thoughts and speeches. I found a ready sale for this kind of humor, and was furnishing a regular department in a magazine with "Funny Fancies of Childhood." I began to stalk them as an Indian stalks

the antelope. I would hide behind sofas and doors, or crawl on my hands and knees among the bushes in the yard to eavesdrop while they were at play. I had all the qualities of a Harpy except remorse.

Once, when I was barren of ideas, and my copy must leave in the next mail, I covered myself in a pile of autumn leaves in the yard, where I knew they intended to come to play. I cannot bring myself to believe that Guy was aware of my hiding place, but even if he was I would be loath to blame him for his setting fire to the leaves, causing the destruction of my new suit of clothes, and nearly cremating a parent.

Soon my own children began to shun me as a pest. Often, when I was creeping upon them like a melancholy ghoul, I would hear them say to each other: "Here comes papa," and they would gather their toys and scurry away to some safer hiding place. Miserable wretch that I was!

And yet I was doing well financially. Before the first year had passed I had saved a thousand dollars, and we had lived in comfort.

But at what a cost! I am not quite clear as to what a Pariah is, but I was everything that it sounds like. I had no friends, no amusements, no enjoyment of life. The happiness of my family had been sacrificed. I was a bee, sucking sordid honey from life's fairest flowers, dreaded and shunned on account of my sting.

One day a man spoke to me, with a pleasant and friendly smile. Not in months had the thing happened. I was passing the undertaking establishment of Peter Heffelbower. Peter stood in the door and saluted me. I stopped, strangely wrung in my heart by his greeting. He asked me inside.

The day was chill and rainy. We went into the back room, where a fire burned in a little stove. A customer came, and Peter left me alone for a while. Presently I felt a new feeling stealing over me—a sense of beautiful calm and content. I looked around the place. There were rows of shining rose-

wood caskets, black palls, trestles, hearse plumes, mourning streamers and all the paraphernalia of the solemn trade. Here was peace, order, silence, the abode of grave and dignified reflections. Here, on the brink of life, was a little niche pervaded by the spirit of eternal rest.

When I entered it the follies of the world abandoned me at the door. I felt no inclination to wrest a humorous idea from those somber and stately trappings. My mind seemed to stretch itself to grateful repose upon a couch draped with gentle thoughts.

A quarter of an hour ago I was an abandoned humorist. Now I was a philosopher, full of serenity and ease. I had found a *refuge* from humor, from the hot chase of the shy quip, from the degrading pursuit of the panting joke, from the restless reach after the nimble repartee.

I had not known Heffelbower well. When he came back I let him talk, fearful that he might prove to be a jarring note in the sweet, dirge-like harmony of his establishment.

But, no. He chimed truly. I gave a long sigh of happiness. Never have I known a man's talk to be as magnificently dull as Peter's was. Compared with it the Dead Sea is a geyser. Never a sparkle or a glimmer of wit marred his words. Commonplaces as trite and as plentiful as blackberries flowed from his lips no more stirring in quality than a last week's tape running from a ticker. Quaking a little I tried upon him one of my best pointed jokes. It fell back ineffectual, with the point broken. I loved that man from then on.

Two or three evenings each week I would steal down to Heffelbower's and revel in his back room. That was my only joy. I began to rise early and hurry through my work, that I might spend more time in my haven. In no other place could I throw off my habit of extracting humorous ideas from my surroundings. Peter's talk left me no opening had I besieged it ever so hard.

Under this influence I began to improve in spirits. It was the recreation from one's labor which every man

needs. I surprised one or two of my former friends by throwing them a smile and a cheery word as I passed them on the streets. Several times I dumfounded my family by relaxing long enough to make a jocose remark in their presence.

I had so long been ridden by the incubus of humor that I seized my hours of holiday with a schoolboy's zest.

My work began to suffer. It was not the pain and burden to me that it had been. I often whistled at my desk, and wrote with far more fluency than before. I accomplished my tasks impatiently, as anxious to be off to my helpful retreat as a drunkard is to get to his tavern.

My wife had some anxious hours in conjecturing where I spent my afternoons. I thought it best not to tell her; women do not understand these things. Poor girl!—she had one shock out of it.

One day I brought home a silver coffin handle for a paper weight and a fine, fluffy hearse plume to dust my papers with.

I loved to see them on my desk, and think of the beloved back room down at Heffelbower's. But Louisa found them, and she shrieked with horror. I had to console her with some lame excuse for having them, but I saw in her eyes that the prejudice was not removed. I had to remove the articles, though, at double-quick time.

One day Peter Heffelbower laid before me a temptation that swept me off my feet. In his sensible, uninspired way he showed me his books, and explained that his profits and his business were increasing rapidly. He had thought of taking in a partner with some cash. He would rather have me than any one he knew. When I left his place that afternoon Peter had my check for the thousand dollars I had in the bank, and I was a partner in his undertaking business.

I went home with feelings of delirious joy, mingled with a certain amount of doubt. I was dreading to tell my wife about it. But I walked on air. To give up the writing of humorous stuff,

once more to enjoy the apples of life, instead of squeezing them to a pulp for a few drops of hard cider to make the public feel funny—what a boon that would be!

At the supper table Louisa handed me some letters that had come during my absence. Several of them contained rejected manuscript. Ever since I first began going to Heffelbower's my stuff had been coming back with alarming frequency. Lately I had been dashing off my jokes and articles with the greatest fluency. Previously I had labored like a bricklayer, slowly and with agony.

Presently I opened a letter from the editor of the weekly with which I had a regular contract. The checks for that weekly article were still our main dependence. The letter ran thus:

"DEAR SIR: As you are aware, our contract for the year expires with the present month. While regretting the necessity for so doing, we must say that we do not care to renew same for the coming year. We were quite pleased with your style of humor, which seems to have delighted quite a large proportion of our readers. But for the past two months we have noticed a decided falling off in its quality.

"Your earlier work showed a spontaneous, easy, natural flow of fun and wit. Of late it is labored, studied and unconvincing, giving painful evidence of hard toil and drudging mechanism.

"Again regretting that we do not consider your contributions available any longer, we are, yours sincerely, THE EDITOR."

I handed this letter to my wife. After she had read it her face grew extremely long, and there were tears in her eyes.

"The mean old thing!" she exclaimed, indignantly. "I'm sure your pieces are just as good as they ever were. And it doesn't take you half as long to write them as it did." And then, I suppose, Louisa thought of the checks that

would cease coming. "Oh, John," she wailed, "what will you do now?"

For an answer I got up and began to do a polka step around the supper table. I am sure Louisa thought the trouble had driven me mad; and I think the children hoped it had, for they tore after me, yelling with glee and emulating my steps. I was now something like their old playmate as of yore.

"The theatre for us to-night!" I shouted, "nothing less. And a late, wild, disreputable supper for all of us at the Palace Restaurant. Lumity-diddle-dee-dee-dum!"

And then I explained my glee by declaring that I was now a partner in a prosperous undertaking establishment, and that written jokes might go hide their heads in sackcloth and ashes for all me.

With the editor's letter in her hand to justify the deed I had done, my wife could advance no objections save a few mild ones based on the feminine inability to appreciate a good thing such as the little back room of Peter Hef—no, of Heffelbower & Co.'s undertaking establishment.

In conclusion, I will say that to-day you will find no man in our town as well liked, as jovial and full of merry sayings as I. My jokes are again noised about and quoted; once more I take pleasure in my wife's confidential chatter without a mercenary thought, while Guy and Viola play at my feet distributing gems of childish humor without fear of the ghastly tormentor who used to dog their steps, notebook in hand.

Our business has prospered finely. I keep the books and look after the shop, while Peter attends to outside matters. He says that my levity and high spirits would simply turn any funeral into a regular Irish wake.



THE DUELLIST'S WIFE

By Rafael Sabatini

HIS first book of verses—"Autumn Leaves"—had run into a third edition within six months; the reviewers had been more than kind; the public was reading him, and he was in a fair way to realize the ambitions of his youth.

Yet Rudolph Lumley was unhappy. His thoughts were retrospective. They dwelt upon the different women, a transient affection for each of whom had inspired the verses which had been collected and given to the world under the pathetic title of "Autumn Leaves."

Particularly and with much bitterness did they dwell upon the last of these flames to which he had played the moth, and who had married a friend of his.

He brooded so much and so bitterly over this that in the end he took a determination to again leave the England to which he was but newly returned.

On a visit of *congé* he sought out a friend of his who had lately wed.

"I've only come to say 'good-by,'" he announced in reply to his friend's cheery greeting.

"But," cried Burleigh, "you've only been in England three days!"

"Three days too long," growled the poet.

Burleigh—who had seen similar symptoms before—eyed him narrowly and sniffed.

"On the warpath again, eh? Well, what's her name?"

"My dear Herbert," said the poet, loftily, "whatever matrimony may have done for you it has not improved your manners."

"It would be vain," returned the other, modestly, "to seek to improve that which the gods have made perfect. But

if not a woman—what is it takes you away again so suddenly?"

"The wish to be rid of the society of women. I have done with them for good."

"My dear Roody," quoth the critical Burleigh, "however fascinating a pursuit may be we can render it stale by abusing it. I quite understand your feelings. As a pastime you found love charming, no doubt. But you wore away its charm by indulging it too freely, too frequently and—may I add?—too indiscriminately. Love is the sugar of life. But what happens to the man who takes sugar with all his viands? I will tell you."

"You needn't trouble; it really doesn't matter. Besides, it no longer concerns me; I have done with the sex. Women are the most inconstant, the most fickle, the most—"

"Hang it all," cried Burleigh, "you forgot I'm married."

Roody might, and indeed was on the point of offering condolences to his friend. For obvious reasons, he restrained himself.

"I shall probably be in Paris the day after to-morrow," he said, presently, "and I should like to look up old Fournailles. Can you give me his address?"

"I have his card somewhere," answered Burleigh, and turning to a little *escriatoire* he began to search for it. "Poor old Fournailles," he sighed.

"Oh, he's poor no longer," returned the poet. "He has become both rich and famous."

"Still," objected the other, whose sentiments were eminently patrician, and whose cult was the adoration of the useless, "it is a trifle derogatory for a

man of his birth to be compelled to open a fencing school and turn what was a pretty accomplishment into a profession."

"The profession of a master of fence is a most gentlemanly one."

"Quite so, quite so, and it makes a man respected, which is much. Ah, here's his card."

Roody took the card, which bore the name of Jules de Fournailles, the description "*Maître d'armes*," and the address "Rue Copernic No. 13." He glanced at it and slipped it into his case with a sigh.

"I'll look him up for the sake of old times, and perhaps a bout or two with the foils may shake me into a more optimistic frame of mind. Exercise is a great antidote to despondency. I'll give him your love, Herbert."

Gloomily Rudolph Lumley paced the deck of the Calais-bound packet. A look of settled melancholy chastened his intellectual—if weak—face, and, combined with its natural pallor, gave him the interesting air of one who has done with the follies of the world and looked deep into the eyes of sorrow.

That was precisely the air which the poet wished to assume, for in a deck chair, a neglected magazine in her lap, and her eyes fixed pensively upon the glistening water, sat a strikingly pretty woman in black.

Of course she nowise interested Lumley. Her sex was to him a book wherein he had read but sorrow, and which he had closed for all time. Still he could not but observe that she was a pretty woman, and as for the tenth time he passed before her, his sorrow wrapped about him like a cloak, he caught himself drawing a parallel between the color of her eyes and that of the water they contemplated—a comparison by which the water suffered in a marked degree.

At Calais he hovered near her with a satellite-like movement, hoping for no reason whatever that her French might prove insufficient and that he might lend her some of his. But in this he was disappointed.

He heard her tell a porter that she was going to Bâle, and again he suffered—for no reason in the world—a pang of disappointment. He saw her pass out on to the platform with an elderly lady and a maid. He observed the grace of her figure, the stateliness of her carriage, the ruddy wealth of her hair, and again he registered—with a sigh—the fact that she was an enchanting creature.

Then, having almost an hour to spare, he sauntered into the buffet, and delivered himself up to the material pleasures of gastronomy.

He emerged once more on to the platform of the *Gare Maritime* as the end of the Engadine Express was vanishing out of the station. It occurred to him that she would be on board the train, and he smiled sadly and cynically without any apparent reason.

Suddenly, to his amazement, he beheld her on the platform talking excitedly to the *Chef de Gare*, and her words being wafted to him, he learned that her mother and her maid had gone on the express, which she had unfortunately missed. The station master advised her to wire that she would follow by the ordinary train leaving in half an hour's time.

She brushed past Lumley on her way to the telegraph office, and some subtle, delicate perfume that she exhaled bewildered him and completed the rout of his senses. Before she had vanished he had resolved that he, too, would go to Switzerland. What did he—a saddened misanthropist—seek in Paris, that pandemonium of human folly, that altar raised to the elusive god of pleasure?

No. It was the mountains, the eternal snows, the peace and majesty of nature that Lumley wanted, and in which he might find solace for his lacerated heart. He pretended to forget that the beautiful unknown with the Venetian hair and the statuesque figure was going to Bâle. How could that possibly interest him or affect his movements?

A quarter of an hour later he boarded the train for Bâle, and quite accidentally he saw her as he passed down the cor-

ridor, and entered a smoking compartment next to hers. He was alone, and he spent his time alternately in reading, thinking and going out into the corridor, ostensibly to admire the flat admirable landscape, surreptitiously to glance at her. She was sharing her *coupé* with a harsh-featured woman; a circumstance which though small in itself happens to have afforded the *motif* of that which followed.

At Laon the poet alighted to bolt an exceedingly bad dinner. He returned to find his carriage occupied. Metaphorically he rubbed his eyes upon discovering that the tenant was the beautiful unknown. She met his glance calmly, and without embarrassment.

"I trust, sir," she said, with great dignity, "that you will pardon my intrusion. But the lady in the next carriage has very pronounced views on ventilation, which unfortunately do not coincide with my own. She insists upon an open window. I could endure it during the day, but it is out of the question in the evening. I knew this to be a smoking carriage, but I also knew that it had only one occupant, and I thought you wouldn't mind. The fore part of the train is so crowded, and I don't mind tobacco in the least."

The poet protested that she need say not another word. He even went in his excitement the length of saying that he was charmed, and he sweepingly condemned the selfishness of travelers in the matter of ventilation.

His papers he placed at her disposal; she thanked him prettily and accepted the offer. Presently she let drop a desultory remark upon literature, which he snatched at to open a conversation. She had read everything, and held most definite and original views which enchanted him. They talked of the stage next. She had seen everything and everybody. The stage as a topic was succeeded by music and art, and he found her no less versed in both these subjects.

Then quite suddenly he asked her if she had read "Autumn Leaves." She had, and she admired the work. He withheld all mention of his authorship.

That was something with which he would surprise her when they were better acquainted. From which it will be seen that already he was looking ahead.

At ten o'clock the attendant from the *wagon-lit* came to announce that his berth was ready, and he left her—his head in a whirl, his misery forgotten, and with it the fickle cause thereof.

He lay awake an inordinately long time, and his thoughts were of her whom he had but left. It was absurd, he said—forgetting the impressionable quality of his nature—that he should so dwell upon a woman whom twelve hours ago he had not seen. He thought of her wit, her beauty, her grace, her charm of manner, and he told himself that here was a woman fitted indeed to be his mate. A woman that would understand and help him in his work.

They met at six o'clock next morning on the platform at Bâle, and he learned that she was going to Zug.

"How fortunate," he exclaimed, in well-feigned surprise. "I am going there myself."

He did not deem it necessary to add that he had only just made up his mind to do so. They took their coffee at the same table, and the poet's spirits were rising fast. He saw to her luggage afterward, and had it put on the *Gottard-bahn*, via Zürich, into which train he presently handed her.

They traveled *vis-à-vis*, and all went merrily until Olten was passed, when suddenly—

"At what time did you say we get to Lucerne?" she inquired.

"You mean Zürich—"

"No, no. Lucerne, of course."

"Lucerne?" he echoed, in surprise. "We don't go to Lucerne."

"We don't go to Lucerne?" she repeated after him, as if she didn't understand.

"It is not the usual way from Bâle to Zug," he explained, reassuringly. "The direct route is via Zürich without changing."

"But my mother is waiting for me at Lucerne! I telegraphed her to do so."

"Oh Lord!" he ejaculated, adding the suggestion that she had better wire.

"But I don't know where to find her. She will meet this train—I mean she will meet the train I should have gone by; it gets there at nine something. Oh, how stupid!"

"I am ever so sorry," said the poet, penitently, "and I am afraid that it is all my fault. You had better telegraph to all the hotels in Lucerne; but I would suggest that you do so from Zug."

After that the poet was crestfallen. He felt that he had lost ground in her good graces.

Zug, however, was reached, and they went to the Zugerhof, whence he assisted her to dispatch telegrams to each of the principal Lucerne hotels. This done they sat down to await events. Easier in mind, she permitted him after lunch to show her around the quaint little town. Together they admired the Rigi and the Pilatus, and the poet waxed rhetorical on the subject of eternal snows.

At his suggestion they took the steamer across the lake to Arth, and it was evening before they got back to Zug again.

"I really can't thank you sufficiently for your kindness," she said, as they paced the deck of the little ferry steamer.

"Say rather that you cannot sufficiently blame me for my stupid blunder this morning."

"No, no, it was quite my fault. I should have told you. However, we have had a delightful day—if," she added, archly glancing up at him, "an exceedingly unconventional one."

"Like stolen fruit," said he, daringly, "our association—may I say?—has been all the sweeter on that account."

She looked up sharply, meeting the solemn glance of his wide-set, thoughtful eyes, and she laughed.

"Well, you know, mother is not very far away. Just behind that little mountain," and she pointed to the Pilatus.

"Yes," he agreed, "quite close to, in fact. Close yet invisible and beyond earshot, like a considerate chaperon. I look forward to meeting that estimable lady."

"She will thank you for having taken

care of me, Mr.——," she broke off in some confusion, to add: "Why, I don't even know your name! Is it not droll?"

The poet braced himself for his *coup de théâtre*. Already in his fancy—his imagination was boundless—he saw the light of interest leaping to her eye at the disclosure of his identity with the author of "Autumn Leaves," which she admired. Inspired by her, who could say but that before the next autumn closed around them he might not have a second and a worthier book to offer her?

"My name, dear lady," said he, dreamily, his black eyes expressing a sort of sad deprecation, "may possibly not be unknown to you."

"Ah, you are then a personage?"

"A very humble one, I fear."

"What a deprecating tone!"

"Life teaches a man to shrug his shoulders," he replied, pathetically.

"You are a politician?"

"Oh, no. Nothing so consequential and useful. I am only——"

But a cry from his companion arrested him in his introduction.

"What's the matter?"

"My husband," was the pregnant answer.

And he, following the direction of her glance, beheld a tall, slender man in black pacing the jetty which they were approaching. Something very like a groan escaped him.

"Now, isn't that fortunate?" she cried.

"Damnable I call it," said the poet to himself.

"He was to have joined us at Lucerne, and I suppose one of the telegrams must have found mother, and brought him over here."

But she was wrong in her conclusions. Monsieur Bernardot, her husband, had indeed met her mother at Lucerne, and had been sent on to Zug to prepare for their coming. He had gone to the Hirsch Hotel, where, a couple of hours after his arrival, he had received an alarming telegram from his mother-in-law, to the effect that his wife had disappeared.

In dismay, he had been on the point of going to Lucerne, when, in the station, his eye fell upon a dressing bag which he recognized as his wife's. He was informed that it was being taken to the Zugerhof, and thither he repaired hot-foot to receive the news that the lady owning that bag had arrived there that morning accompanied by a gentleman. Monsieur Bernardot, who was of an extremely jealous nature, fell into a paroxysm of rage. He was told that the lady and her companion had gone out with the intention of taking the steamer to Arth and back. And so on the jetty he waited, his anger white-hot, to receive them.

In a private room of the Zugerhof sat Madam Bernardot very pale and tearful, while her lord and master crossed and re-crossed the chamber in great strides, waved his arms like a windmill and talked steadily at the rate of some three hundred words—one hundred of which were vituperative—to the minute.

Lumley, calm, serene and suave, sat upon the sofa, and waited until the Frenchman, for want of breath, should be compelled to pause, and would allow him to insert a word or two. To Lumley the situation presented a humorous as well as a tragic side. It was unfortunate that he had not told the lady his name, after all; upon the fact of her not knowing it rested the present situation. Believe that she did not really know it, Bernardot could not; he very naturally inferred that she purposely withheld it.

At length, with a dramatic gesture, the Frenchman challenged the poet to say something.

"With pleasure," said Lumley, with a charming smile, and in a French that contained not the faintest vestige of an alien accent. "In the first place, monsieur, permit me to observe that you are behaving in a very ridiculous manner."

"Ridiculous?" roared Bernardot.

"In the second place," continued the poet, calmly, "you are behaving in a very unworthy manner, and you are placing this excellent lady, who has the misfortune to be your wife, in an ex-

ceedingly, and wholly unnecessarily painful position."

"Has, monsieur the effrontery to assume a tone of *persiflage*? I demand that you explain yourself."

"The demand is an interruption that only serves to retard the explanation," was the bland reply. "I had the honor to meet this lady twenty-four hours ago at Laon."

And he proceeded to give the details of their meeting *en voiture*, of the slight services that he had had the good fortune to render her, and of the mistake in which these had culminated that morning at Bâle.

"And," demanded Bernardot, with a sneer, "do you expect me to believe this ingenious narrative?"

"I am in the habit of speaking the truth, sir," said the poet, with dignity.

"Your habits, monsieur, are of no interest to me. I do not believe a word of what you have told me."

"Monsieur!" cried the poet, rising.

"Explain to me, if you can, the mistake owing to which I find you taking a trip on a lake steamer with my wife."

"It was no mistake. One must kill time."

"Kill time, *hein*? Indeed, monsieur has a talent for explaining. Is monsieur in the legal profession?"

"Monsieur," began Lumley, angrily.

"Oh, don't excite him, for Heaven's sake," implored the lady, in English. "He is a great duellist."

The information seemed suddenly to rob the poet of a good deal of his *aplomb*.

"It appears to me that he is exciting himself," said the poet, with an ease which he was far from feeling.

"*Que dites-vous?*" demanded the husband, to whom this exchange of words in a foreign language savored strongly of collusion.

"Perhaps, monsieur," said the poet, politely, "you will permit me to terminate a rather unfortunate interview by withdrawing."

"Withdrawing?" snarled Bernardot, showing his teeth. "For what do you take me, monsieur? Do you think that

I am a man that allows his honor to be trampled in the dust, and then permits the offender to withdraw? Monsieur, I demand satisfaction."

"I have already given you all the satisfaction in my power. If you do not find it sufficient, the fault, monsieur, must lie with you."

Bernardot grinned horribly.

"There is a satisfaction of another sort, monsieur, which you shall render me."

The poet's heart sank. He had spent a very pleasant day with Madam Bernardot, but to be butchered for it was rather, he thought, a heavy price.

"I should like monsieur to observe," said he, "that the violence of your expressions is frightening this lady."

Bernardot was very rude in his retort, which he wound up by repeating that Lumley must give him satisfaction.

The poet shook his head.

"What you ask is impossible, monsieur. I beg that you will think it over calmly."

"Does monsieur suggest that I am anything but calm at present?" he roared.

"I suggest only, monsieur, that you think it over. Discuss it with madam. I am sure that upon reflection you will bring yourself to see the case as I have put it."

"You may be right, and you may be wrong, but I do not like the tone that you have taken. I have observed throughout a certain note of *persiflage* that I consider peculiarly insulting. You have used expressions that I cannot forgive."

"Endeavor to forget them," suggested the poet.

"I shall do so when I have avenged them."

The poet shuddered.

"Monsieur, I most willingly apologize for those expressions."

"Bah!"

"I will take back those expressions, monsieur."

"Here is my card," cried Bernardot. "If you will favor me with yours I will find a friend to wait upon you to-mor-

row. For the rest, in five hours we can reach France."

The poet was on the horns of a dilemma. To refuse to comply would be an act of cowardice which he did not care to perform in the presence of a lady. The easiest solution appeared to be to give Bernardot his card and start for England by the first train. Accordingly he drew his case from his pocket, and from that a card which he handed to Bernardot.

"There, monsieur, since you insist; but I trust that you will come to see that a meeting would be most inconvenient."

The Frenchman took the card, and as he glanced at it the expression of his face changed suddenly to surprise. Immediately his tone became respectful in the extreme.

"Monsieur, you are very magnanimous," said he. "I will take you at your word and accept the apology which a moment ago I refused—churlishly perhaps."

"Why, then," cried the poet, in mingled surprise and joy, "no more need be said."

He took his leave of them with gracefully expressed regrets for the misunderstanding which he had been so unfortunate as to bring about, and Bernardot went the length of begging him to say no more.

Bernardot and his wife withdrew to the Hirsch Hotel, and Lumley did not see them again. He left next day for Paris.

On the morning after his arrival in the French capital it occurred to him to pay his visit to Fournailles, not only as a friend, but as a pupil, for the poet suddenly realized that a knowledge of fence may be desirable and useful.

He took out his cardcase and emptied it in his search for Fournailles' card. But in vain; he had lost it. Then all at once he remembered Bernardot's abrupt change of manner, and he suddenly grasped the meaning of it.

He had given Fournailles' card to Bernardot, and Bernardot had not unnaturally shrunk from the ordeal of meeting a fencing master with cold steel.

THE WAY

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

ONCE as I toiled along the world's rough road,
I longed to lift each fellow pilgrim's load.

I yearned to smooth all obstacles away,
And make the journey one glad holiday.

Now that so much of life's long path is trod,
I better know the purposes of God.

As I come nearer to the final goal,
I grasp the meaning of the Over-Soul.

This is the message as it comes to me—
Do well the task thy Maker set for thee.

Cheer the despairing—ease his load a bit,
Or teach him how he best may carry it,

But do not lift it wholly, lest at length
Thy too great kindness rob him of his strength.

He wrongs his brother who performs his part.
Wake thou the sleeping Angel in each heart:

Inspire the doubting soul to search and find,
Then go thy way, nor wait for those behind.

Who tries, may follow, and the goal attain;
Perpetual effort is the price of gain.

The gods make room upon the heights sublime,
Only for those who have the will to climb.

LOCAL COLOR

By Jack London

Author of "The Call of the Wild," "The God of His Fathers," Etc.

"I DO not see why you should not turn this immense amount of unusual information to account," I told him. "Unlike most men equipped with similar knowledge, *you* have expression. Your style is—"

"Is sufficiently—er—jurnalese," he interrupted suavely.

"Precisely! You could turn a pretty penny."

But he interlocked his fingers meditatively, shrugged his shoulders, and dismissed the subject.

"I have tried it. It does not pay.

"It was paid for and published," he added, after a pause. "And I was also honored with sixty days in the *Hobo*."

"The *Hobo*?" I ventured.

"The *Hobo* . . ." He fixed his eyes on my Spencer and ran along the titles while he cast his definition. "The *Hobo*, my dear fellow, is the name for that particular place of detention in city and county jails, wherein are assembled tramps, drunks, beggars, and the riffraff of petty offenders. The word itself is a pretty one, and it has a history. *Hautbois*—there's the French of it. *Haut*, meaning high, and *bois*, wood. In English it becomes hautboy, a wooden musical instrument of two foot tone, I believe, played with a double reed; an oboe, in fact. You remember in 'Henry IV':

"The case of a treble hautboy was a mansion for him, a court."

"From this to ho-boy is but a step, and for that matter the English used the terms interchangeably. But—and mark you, the leap paralyzes one—crossing the Western Ocean, in York

City hautboy, or ho-boy, becomes the name by which the night scavenger is known. In a way one understands its being born of the contempt for wandering players and musical fellows. But see the beauty of it! The burn and the brand! The night scavenger, the pariah, the miserable, the despised, the man without caste—and in its next incarnation, consistently and logically, it attaches itself to the American outcast, namely, the tramp. Then, as others have mutilated its sense, the tramp mutilates its form, and ho-boy becomes exultantly hobo. Wherefore, the large stone and brick cells, lined with double and triple-tiered bunks, in which the law is wont to incarcerate him, he calls the *Hobo*. Interesting, isn't it?"

And I sat back and marveled secretly at this encyclopedic-minded man, this Leith Clay-Randolph, this common tramp who made himself at home in my den, charmed such friends as gathered at my small table, outshone me with his brilliance and his manners, spent my spending money, smoked my best cigars, and selected from my ties and studs with a cultivated and discriminating eye.

He absently walked over to the shelves and looked into Loria's "Economic Foundations of Society."

"I like to talk with you," he remarked. "You are not indifferently schooled. You've read the books, and your economic interpretation of history, as you choose to call it" (this with a sneer) "eminently fits you for an intellectual outlook on life. But your sociologic judgments are vitiated by your lack of practical knowledge. Now I, who know the books, pardon me,

somewhat better than you, know life, too. I have lived it, naked, taken it up in both my hands and looked at it, and tasted it, the flesh and the blood of it, and, being purely an intellectual, I have been biased by neither passion nor prejudice. All of which is necessary for clear concepts, and all of which you lack. Ah! a really clever passage. Listen!"

And he read aloud to me in his remarkable manner, paralleling the text with a running criticism and commentary, lucidly wording involved and lumbering periods, casting side and cross lights upon the subject, introducing points the author had blundered past and objections he had ignored, catching up lost ends, flinging a contrast into a paradox and reducing it to a coherent and succinctly stated truth—in short, flashing his luminous genius in a blaze of fire over pages erstwhile dull and heavy and lifeless.

It is long since that Leith Clay-Randolph (note the hyphenated surname) knocked at the back door of Idlewild and melted the heart of Gunda. Now Gunda was cold as her Norway hills, and in her least frigid moods was even capable of permitting especially nice-looking tramps to sit on the back stoop and devour lone crusts and forlorn and forsaken chops. But that a tatterdemalion out of the night should invade the sanctity of her kitchen-kingdom and delay dinner while she set a place for him in the warmest corner, was a matter of such moment that the Sunflower went to see. Ah, the Sunflower, of the soft heart and swift sympathy! Leith Clay-Randolph threw his glamour over her for fifteen long minutes, while I brooded with my cigar, and then she fluttered back with vague words and the suggestion of a cast-off suit I would never miss.

"Surely I shall never miss it," I said, and I had in mind the dark gray suit with the pockets draggled from the freightage of many books, books which had spoiled more than one day's fishing sport.

"I should advise you, however," I added, "to mend the pockets first."

But the Sunflower's face clouded.

"N-o," she said, "the black one."

"The black one!" This explosively, incredulously. "I wear it quite often. I—I intended wearing it to-night."

"You have two better ones, and you know I never liked it, dear," the Sunflower hurried on. "Besides, it's shiny—"

"Shiny!"

"It—it soon will be, which is just the same, and the man is really estimable. He is nice and refined, and I am sure he—"

"Has seen better days."

"Yes, and the weather is raw and beastly, and his clothes are threadbare. And you have many suits—"

"Five," I corrected, "counting in the dark gray fishing outfit with the draggled pockets."

"And he has none, no home, nothing—"

"Not even a sunflower"—putting my arm around her—"wherefore he is deserving of all things. Give him the black suit, dear—nay, the best one, the very best one. Under high heaven for such lack there must be compensation!"

"You are a dear!" And the Sunflower fluttered to the door and looked back alluringly. "You are a perfect dear."

And this after seven years, I marveled, till she was back again, timid and apologetic.

"I—I gave him one of your white shirts. He wore a horrid cheap cotton thing, and I knew it would look ridiculous. And then his shoes were so slippish, I let him have a pair of yours, the old ones with the narrow caps—"

"Old ones!"

"Well, they pinched horribly, and you know they did."

It was ever thus the Sunflower vindicated things.

And so Leith Clay-Randolph came to Idlewild to stay, how long I did not dream. Nor how often, for like an erratic comet he came and went. Fresh he would arrive, and cleanly clad, from grand folk who were his friends as I was his friend, and again, weary and

worn, he would creep up the briar-rose path from the Montanas or Mexico. And without a word, when his *wanderlust* gripped him, he was off and away into that great mysterious under-world he called "The Road."

"I could not bring myself to leave until I had thanked you, you of the open hand and heart," he said on the night he donned my good black suit.

And I confess I was startled when I glanced over the top of my paper and saw a lofty-browed and eminently respectable-looking gentleman, boldly and carelessly at ease. The Sunflower was right. He must have known better days for the black suit and white shirt to have effected such a transformation. Involuntarily, I arose to my feet, prompted instinctively to meet him on equal ground. And then it was the Clay-Randolph glamour descended upon me. He slept at Idlewild that night, and the next night, and for many nights. And he was a man to love. The Son of Anak, otherwise Rufus the Blue-Eyed, and also plebeianly known as Tots, rioted with him from briar-rose path to farthest orchard, scalped him in the haymow with barbaric yells, and once, with Pharisaic zeal, was near to crucifying him under the attic roof beams. The Sunflower would have loved him for the Son of Anak's sake, had she not loved him for his own. As for myself, let the Sunflower tell, in the times he elected to be gone, of how often I wondered when Leith would come back again, Leith the Lovable.

Yet he was a man of whom we knew nothing. Beyond the fact that he was Kentucky-born, his past was a blank. He never spoke of it. And he was a man who prided himself upon his utter divorce of reason from emotion. To him the word spelled itself out in problems. I charged him once with being guilty of emotion when roaring around the den with the Son of Anak pic-a-back. Not so, he heid. Could he not cuddle a sense-delight for the problem's sake?

He was elusive. A man who intermingled nameless argot with polysyllabic and technical terms, he would

seem sometimes the veriest criminal, in speech, face, expression, everything; at other times the cultured and polished gentleman, and again, the philosopher and scientist. But there was something glimmering there which I never caught—flashes of sincerity, of real feeling, I imagined, which were sped ere I could grasp; echoes of the man he once was, possibly, or hints of the man behind the mask. But the mask he never lifted, and the real man we never knew.

"But the sixty days with which you were rewarded for your journalism?" I asked. "Never mind Loria. Tell me."

"Well, if I must." He flung one knee over the other and laughed shortly.

"In a town which shall be nameless," he began; "in fact, a city of fifty thousand, a fair and beautiful city wherein men slave for dollars and women for dress, an idea came to me. My *front* was prepossessing, as fronts go, and my pockets empty. I had in recollection a thought I once entertained of writing a reconciliation of Kant and Spencer. Not that they are reconcilable, of course, but the room offered for scientific satire—"

I waved my hand impatiently, and he broke off.

"I was just tracing my mental states for you in order to show the genesis of the action," he explained. "However, the idea came. What was the matter with a tramp sketch for the daily press? The Irreconcilability of the Constable and the Tramp, for instance? So I hit the *drag* (the drag, my dear fellow, is merely the street), or the high places, if you will, for a newspaper office. The elevator whisked me into the sky, and Cerberus, in the guise of an anemic office boy, guarded the door. Consumption, one could see it at a glance; nerve, Irish, colossal; tenacity, undoubted; dead inside the year.

"Pale youth," quoth I, "I pray thee the way to the *sanctum sanctorum*, to the Most High Cock-a-lorum."

"He deigned to look at me, scornfully, with infinite weariness.

"'G'wan an' see the janitor. I don't know nothin' about the gas.'

"'Nay, my lily-white, the editor.'

"'Wich editor?' he snapped, like a young bull-terrier. 'Dramatic? Sportin'? Society? Sunday? Weekly? Daily? Telegraph? Local? News? Editorial? Wich?'

"'Which, I did not know.'

"'The Editor,' I proclaimed stoutly. 'The *only* Editor.'

"'Aw, Spargo!' he sniffed.

"'Of course, Spargo,' I answered. 'Who else?'

"'Gimme yer card,' says he.

"'My what?'

"'Yer card—— Say! Wot's yer business, anyway?'

"'And the anaemic Cerberus sized me up with so insolent an eye that I reached over and took him out of his chair. I knocked on his meager chest with my fore knuckle and fetched forth a weak, gaspy cough, but he looked at me unflinchingly, much like a defiant sparrow held in the hand.'

"'I am the census-taker Time,' I boomed, in sepulchral tones. 'Beware lest I knock too loud.'

"'Oh, I don't know,' he sneered.

"'Whereupon I rapped him smartly, and he choked and turned purplish.'

"'Well, whatcher want?' he wheezed with returning breath.

"'I want Spargo, the only Spargo.'

"'Then leave go, an' I'll glide an' see.'

"'No you don't, my lily-white.' And I took a tighter grip on his collar. 'No bouncers in mine, understand! I'll go along.'

Leith dreamily surveyed the long ash of his cigar and turned to me.

"Do you know, Anak, you can't appreciate the joy of being the buffoon, playing the clown. You couldn't do it if you wished. Your pitiful little conventions and smug assumptions of decency would prevent. But to simply turn loose your soul to every whimsicality, to play the fool unafraid of any possible result, why that requires a man other than a householder and law-respecting citizen.

"However, as I was saying, I saw the

only Spargo. He was a big, beefy, red-faced personage, full-jowled and double-chinned, sweating at his desk in his shirt sleeves. It was August, you know. He was talking into a telephone when I entered, or swearing rather, I should say, and the while studying me with his eyes. When he hung up he turned to me expectantly.

"'You are a very busy man,' I said.

"He jerked a nod with his head, and waited.

"'And after all, is it worth it?' I went on. 'What does life mean that it should make you sweat? What justification do you find in sweat? Now look at me. I toil not, neither do I spin——'

"'Who are you? What are you?' he bellowed with a suddenness that was—well, rude, tearing the words out as a dog does a bone.

"'A very pertinent question, sir,' I acknowledged. 'First, I am a man; next, a downtrodden American citizen. I am cursed with neither profession, trade, nor expectations. Like Esau, I am pottageless. My residence is everywhere; the sky is my coverlet. I am of the dispossessed, a *sansculotte*, a proletarian, or, in simpler phraseology addressed to your understanding, a tramp.'

"'What the hell——?'

"'Nay, fair sir, a tramp, a man of devious ways and strange lodgments and multifarious——'

"'Quit it!' he shouted. 'What do you want?'

"'I want money.'

"He started and half-reached for an open drawer, intending a gun-play, undoubtedly, then bethought himself and growled:

"'This is no bank.'

"'Nor have I checks to cash. But I have, sir, an idea, which, by your leave and kind assistance, I shall transmute into cash. In short, how does a tramp sketch, done by a tramp to the life, strike you? Are you open to it? Do your readers hunger for it? Do they crave after it? Can they be happy without it?'

"I thought for a moment that he

would have an apoplexy, but he quelled the unruly blood and said he liked my nerve. I thanked him and assured him I liked it myself. Then he offered me a cigar and said he thought he'd do business with me.

"But mind you," he said, when he had jabbed a bunch of copy paper into my hand and given me a pencil from his vest pocket, "mind you, I won't stand for the high and flighty philosophical, and I perceive you have a tendency that way. Throw in the local color, wads of it, and a bit of sentiment perhaps, but no slumgullion about political economy or social strata or such stuff. Make it concrete, to the point, with snap and go and life, crisp and crackling and interesting—tumble?"

"And I tumbled and borrowed a dollar.

"Don't forget the local color!" he shouted after me through the door.

"And, Anak, it was the local color that did for me.

"The anæmic Cerberus grinned when I took the elevator. 'Got the bounce, eh?'

"'Nay, pale youth so lily-white,' I chortled, waving the copy paper; 'not the bounce, but a detail. I'll be city editor in three months, and then I'll make you jump.'

"And as the elevator boy stopped at the next floor down to take on a pair of maids, he strolled over to the shaft, and without frills or verbiage, consigned me and my detail to the deepest perdition. But I liked him. He had pluck and was unafraid, and he knew, as well as I, that Death clutched him close."

"But how could you, Leith," I cried, the picture of the consumptive lad strong before me, "how could you treat him so barbarously?"

Leith laughed dryly.

"My dear fellow, how often must I explain to you your confusions? Orthodox sentiment and stereotyped emotion master you. And then your temperament! You are really incapable of rational judgments. Cerberus? Pshaw! A flash expiring, a mote of fading sparkle, a dim-pulsing and dying or-

ganism—pouf! a snap of the fingers, a puff of breath, what would you? A pawn in the game of life. Not even a problem. There is no problem in a still-born babe, nor in a dead child. They never arrived. Nor did Cerberus. Now for a really pretty problem—"

"But the local color?" I prodded him.

"That's right," he replied. "Keep me in the running. Well, I took my handful of copy paper down to the railroad yards (for local color), dangled my legs from a side-door Pullman, which is another name for a box car; and ran off the stuff. Of course I made it clever and brilliant and all that, with my little unanswerable slings at the State and my social paradoxes, and withal made it concrete enough to dis-satisfy the average citizen. From the tramp standpoint, the constabulary of the township was particularly rotten, and I proceeded to open the eyes of the good people. It is a proposition, mathematically demonstrable, that it costs the community more to arrest, convict and confine its tramps in jail than to send them as guests, for like periods of time, to a first-class hotel. And this I developed, giving the facts and figures, the constable fees and the mileage, and the court and jail expenses. Oh, it was convincing, and it was true; and I did it in a lightly humorous fashion which fetched the laugh and left the sting. The main objection to the system, I contended, was the defrauding and robbery of the tramp. The good money which the community paid out for him should enable him to riot in luxury instead of rotting in dungeons. I even drew the figures so fine as to permit him not only to live in a good hotel, but to smoke two twenty-five-cent cigars and indulge in a ten-cent shine each day, and still not cost the taxpayers so much as they were accustomed to pay for his conviction and jail entertainment. And, as subsequent events proved, it made the taxpayers wince.

"One of the constables I drew to the life; nor did I forget a certain Sol Glenhart, as rotten a police judge to be found between the seas. And this I

say out of a vast experience. While he was notorious in local trampdom, his civic sins were not only not unknown, but a crying reproach to the townspeople. Of course, I refrained from mentioning name or habitat, drawing the picture in an impersonal, composite sort of way, which none the less blinded no one to the faithfulness of the local color.

"Naturally, myself a tramp, the tenor of the article was a protest against the maltreatment of the tramp. Cutting the taxpayers to the pits of their purses threw them open to sentiment, and then in I tossed the sentiment, lumps and chunks of it. Trust me, it was excellently done, and the rhetoric—say! just listen to the tail of my peroration:

"So, as we go *mooching* along the drag, with a sharp lamp out for John Law, we cannot help remembering that we are beyond the pale; that our ways are not their ways; and that the ways of John Law with us are different from his ways with other men. Poor lost souls, wailing for a crust in the dark, we know full well our helplessness and ignominy. And well may we repeat after a stricken brother over-seas: 'Our pride it is to know no spur of pride.' Man has forgotten us; God has forgotten us; only are we remembered by the harpies of justice, who prey upon our distress and coin our sighs and tears into bright shining dollars."

"Incidentally, my picture of Sol Glenhart, the police judge, was good. A striking likeness, and unmistakable, with phrases tripping along like this: 'This crook-nosed, gross-bodied harpie'; 'this civic sinner, this judicial highwayman'; 'possessing the morals of the Tenderloin and an honor which thieves' honor puts to shame'; 'who compounds criminality with shyster-sharks, and in atonement railroads the unfortunate and impecunious to rotting cells'—and so forth, and so forth, style sophomoric and devoid of the dignity and tone one would employ in a dissertation on 'Surplus Value' or 'The Fallacies of Marxism,' but just the stuff the dear public likes.

"'Humph!' grunted Spargo when I put the copy in his fist. 'Swift gait you strike, my man.'

"I fixed an hypnotic eye on his vest

pocket and he passed out one of his superior cigars, which I burned while he ran through the stuff. Twice or thrice he looked over the top of the paper at me, searchingly, but said nothing till he had finished.

"Where'd you work, you pencil-pusher?" he asked.

"My maiden effort," I simpered, modestly, scraping one foot and faintly simulating embarrassment.

"Maiden hell! What salary do you want?"

"Nay, nay," I answered. "No salary in mine, thank you most to death. I am a free downtrodden American citizen, and no man shall say my time is his."

"Save John Law," he chuckled.

"Save John Law," said I.

"How did you know I was bucking the police department?" he demanded, abruptly.

"I didn't know, but I knew you were in training," I answered. "Yesterday morning a charitably inclined female presented me with three biscuits, a piece of cheese, and a funereal slab of chocolate cake, all wrapped in the current *Clarion*, wherein I noted an unholy glee because the *Cowbell's* candidate for chief of police had been turned down. Likewise I learned the municipal election was at hand, and put two and two together. Another mayor, and the right kind, means new police commissioners; new police commissioners means new chief of police; new chief of police means *Cowbell's* candidate; *ergo*, your turn to play."

"He stood up, shook my hand, and emptied his plethoric vest pocket. I put them away and puffed on the old one.

"'You'll do,' he jubilated. 'This stuff' (patting my copy) 'is the first gun of the campaign. You'll touch off many another before we're done. I've been looking for you for years. Come on in, on the editorial.'

"But I shook my head.

"'Come, now!' he admonished, sharply. 'No shenanagin! The *Cowbell* must have you. It hungers for

you, craves after you, won't be happy till it gets you. What say?"

"In short, he wrestled with me, but I was bricks, and at the end of half an hour the only Spargo gave it up.

"Remember," he said, "any time you reconsider, I'm open. No matter where you are, wire me and I'll send the ducats to come on at once."

"I thanked him, and asked the pay for my copy—*dope*, he called it.

"Oh, regular routine," he said. "Get it the first Thursday after publication."

"Then I'll have to trouble you for a few scads until—"

"He looked at me and smiled. 'Better cough up, eh?'

"Sure," I said. "Nobody to identify me, so make it cash."

"And cash it was made, thirty *plunks* (a plunk is a dollar, my dear Anak), and I pulled my freight . . . eh? Oh, departed.

"Pale youth," I said to Cerberus, "I am bounced." (He grinned with pallid joy.) "And in token of the sincere esteem I bear you, receive this little"—his eyes flashed and he threw up one hand, swiftly, to guard his head from the expected blow—"this little memento."

"I had intended to slip a fiver into his hand, but for all his surprise, he was too quick for me.

"Aw, keep yer dirt," he snarled.

"I like you still better," I said, adding a second fiver. "You grow perfect. But you must take it."

"He backed away growling, but I caught him around the neck, roughed what little wind he had out of him, and left him doubled up with the two fives in his pocket. But hardly had the elevator started, when the two coins tinkled on the roof and fell down between the car and the shaft. As luck had it, the door was not closed, and I put out my hand and caught them. The elevator boy's eyes bulged.

"It's a way I have," I said, airily, pocketing them.

"Some bloke's dropped 'em down the shaft," he whispered, visibly awed by the circumstance.

"It stands to reason," said I.

"I'll take charge of 'em," he volunteered.

"Nonsense!"

"You'd better turn 'em over," he threatened, "or I stop the works."

"Pshaw!"

"And stop he did, between floors.

"Young man," I said, "have you a mother?" (He looked serious, as though regretting his act, and to further impress him I rolled up my right sleeve with greatest care.) "Are you prepared to die?" (I got a stealthy crouch on, and put a cat-foot forward.) "But a minute, a brief minute, stands between you and eternity." (Here I crooked my right hand into a claw and slid the other foot up.) "Young man, young man," I trumpeted, "in thirty seconds I shall tear your heart dripping from your bosom and stoop to hear you shriek in hell."

"It fetched him. He gave one whoop, the car shot down, and I was on the drag. You see, Anak, it's a habit I can't shake off of leaving vivid memories behind. No one ever forgets me.

"I had not got to the corner when I heard a familiar voice at my shoulder:

"Hello, Cinders! Which way?"

"It was Chi Slim, who had been with me once when I was thrown off a freight in Jacksonville. 'Couldn't see 'em fer cinders,' he described it, and the *monica* stuck by me. . . . Monica? From *monos*. The tramp nickname.

"Bound south," I answered. "And how's Slim?"

"Bum. Bulls is horstile."

"Where's the push?"

"At the hang-out. I'll put you wise."

"Who's the main guy?"

"Me, and don't yer forget it."

The lingo was rippling from Leith's lips, but perforce I stopped him.

"Pray translate. Remember, I am a foreigner."

"Certainly," he answered, cheerfully. "Slim is in poor luck. *Bull* means policeman. He tells me the bulls are hostile. I ask where the *push* is, the gang he travels with. By *putting me wise* he will direct me to where the gang is

hanging out. The *main guy* is the leader. Slim claims that distinction.

"Slim and I hiked out to a neck of woods just beyond town, and there was the push, a score of husky hobos, charmingly located on the bank of a little purling stream.

"'Come on, you mugs!' Slim addressed them. 'Throw yer feet! Here's Cinders, an' we must do 'm proud.'

"All of which signifies that the hobos had better strike out and do some lively begging in order to get the whereabouts to celebrate my return to the fold after a year's separation. But I flashed my dough and Slim sent several of the younger men off to buy the booze. Take my word for it, Anak, it was a blow-out memorable in Trampdom to this day. It's amazing the quantity of booze thirty plunks will buy, and it is equally amazing the quantity of booze twenty stiffs will get outside of. Beer and cheap wine made up the card, with alcohol thrown in for the *blowed-in-the-glass stiffs*. It was great—an orgy under the sky, a contest of beakermen, a study in primitive beastliness. To me there is something fascinating in a drunken man, and were I a college president I should institute P. G. psychology courses in practical drunkenness. It would beat the books and compete with the laboratory.

"All of which is neither here nor there, for after sixteen hours of it, early next morning, the whole push was *copped* by an overwhelming array of constables and carted off to jail. After breakfast, about ten o'clock, we were lined upstairs into court, limp and spiritless, the twenty of us. And there, under his purple panoply, nose crooked like a Napoleonic eagle and eyes glittering and beady, sat Sol Glenhart.

"'John Ambrose!' the clerk called out, and Chi Slim, with the ease of long practice, stood up.

"'Vagrant, your honor,' the bailiff volunteered, and his honor, not deigning to look at the prisoner, snapped: 'Ten days,' and Chi Slim sat down.

"And so it went, with the monotony of clockwork, fifteen seconds to the man, four men to the minute, the mugs

bobbing up and down in turn like marionettes. The clerk called the name, the bailiff the offense, the judge the sentence, and the man sat down. That was all. Simple, eh? Superb!

"Chi Slim nudged me. 'Give 'm a *spiel*, Cinders. You kin do it.'

"I shook my head.

"'G'wan,' he urged. 'Give 'm a ghost story. The mugs'll take it all right. And you kin throw yer feet fer tobacco for us till we get out.'

"L. C. Randolph!" the clerk called.

"I stood up, but a hitch came in the proceedings. The clerk whispered to the judge, and the bailiff smiled.

"'You are a newspaper man, I understand, Mr. Randolph?' his Honor remarked, sweetly.

"It took me by surprise, for I had forgotten the *Cowbell* in the excitement of succeeding events, and I now saw myself on the edge of the pit I had digged.

"'That's yer *graft*. Work it,' Slim prompted.

"'It's all over but the shouting,' I groaned back, but Slim, unaware of the article, was puzzled.

"'Your Honor,' I answered, 'when I can get work, that is my occupation.'

"'You take quite an interest in local affairs, I see.' (Here his Honor took up the morning's *Cowbell* and ran his eye up and down a column I knew was mine.) 'Color is good,' he commented, an appreciative twinkle in his eyes; 'pictures excellent, characterized by broad, Sargent-like effects. Now this . . . this judge you have depicted . . . you ah, draw from life, I presume?'

"'Rarely, your Honor,' I answered. 'Composites, ideals, rather . . . er, I may say.'

"'But you have color, sir, unmistakable color,' he continued.

"'That is splashed on afterward,' I explained.

"'This judge, then, is not modeled from life, as one might be led to believe?'

"'No, your Honor.'

"'Ah, I see, merely a type of judicial wickedness?'

"'Nay, more, your Honor,' I said, boldly; 'an ideal.'

"'Splashed with local color afterward? Ha! Good! And may I venture to ask how much you received for this bit of work?'

"'Thirty dollars, your Honor.'

"'Hum, good!' And his tone abruptly changed. 'Young man, local color is a bad thing. I find you guilty of it and sentence you to thirty days' imprisonment, or, at your pleasure, impose a fine of thirty dollars.'

"'Alas!' said I. 'I spent the thirty dollars in riotous living.'

"'And thirty days more for wasting your substance. Next case!' said his Honor to the clerk.

"Slim was stunned. 'Gee!' he whispered. 'Gee! The push gets ten days and you get sixty. Gee!'

Leith struck a match, lighted his dead cigar and opened the book on his knees.

"Returning to the original conversation, don't you find, Anak, that though Loria handles the bi-partition of the revenues with scrupulous care, he yet omits one important factor, namely—"

"Yes," I said, absently; "yes."



CITYWARD

HIGH banks and feathery trees, against a sky
 Of dusky rose; the river, broad and pale,
 Moves through dim places to obscurity,
 Far in the shadow-land of hill and dale
 Lamps gleam from sheltered windows. Suddenly
 A flare of furnace lights the flying rail,
 And dumb walls echo as the train leaps by.
 (Night follows fast behind us!)

Darkness blots out the view. I turn my eyes
 Indifferently upon the faces near,
 Dull, or deep-lined with long anxieties;
 Gay with young hopes, or sharpened by the fear
 Of coming sorrow. Goodness in disguise
 And flaunting evil caged together here
 Between jarred glass and swinging draperies.
 (Night follows fast behind us!)

Glad faces, somber faces. Fortune send
 Your heart's desire! Heaven grant release
 From care—from fear—from suffering, and mend
 Long days of patience with fair years of peace!
 Poor painted masks, if only I might lend
 Part of my joy before your summers cease!
 Because Love meets me at my journey's end,
 Love, that transfigures life—I would befriend
 The whole wide world—would succor all mankind.
 (Night follows fast behind!)

CAROLINE DUER.

A MANIPULATOR

By Alberta Bancroft

WHEN old Miss Kimball died people looked at one another, and then they looked at her enormous house, and then they talked about Sallie.

It would be a wonderful thing for Sallie. It would be a wonderful thing for Portland to sit by and watch her.

Young men dreamed of Sallie by night and wondered they had never thought of falling in love with her before. To be sure, her chin was a trifle square—there was no doubt but Sallie had a will of her own—but, then, she was of that rare, vigorous, blond type which is never in danger of fading into ashy colorlessness later.

And what young fellow wants a wife these days who is merely the echo of himself?

But when the will came to be probated it appeared that Sallie was not to disport herself in Miss Kimball's capacious wooden mansion after all.

Miss Kimball, after remembering the various members of her family in doles from five hundred to ten thousand dollars apiece, left the bulk of her property, including the Portland house and grounds, to one Kay Kimball, a cousin in the East, "as a partial retribution for having wrecked her life." That was the wording.

Sallie was munificently remembered with five thousand dollars; the interest of which, twenty-five dollars a month, to be used as she saw fit; the principal, to come under her control at the age of thirty-five—some fourteen years off.

Portland held up its hands in amaze. Who was this unknown Kay Kimball, whom no one had ever seen or heard spoken of before? How had old Miss

Kimball ruined her life? What would become of Sallie? And what were the Kimballs going to do about it?

The Kimballs, at the present juncture, were holding mass-meetings; the younger element openly indignant and rebellious, bound on breaking the will and bringing Sallie properly into her own; the older members counseling deliberation and the avoidance, if possible, of dry cleaning the impaired family linen in public.

And then Sallie had to add her vigorous young voice to the turmoil and bring proceedings to a deadlock by announcing that the breaking of wills was horrid bad form anyway, and she wouldn't have any more of Aunt Kimball's money for any consideration, and she was going to make her own living.

The Kimballs, completely demoralized by this new and particularly rampant piece of Sallieism—gracious alive! how could a girl like Sallie make her own living!—felt that matters had now reached more than a climax, and took their burden to Uncle John. They waited upon him by ones and twos and threes, and solemnly invited him to make Sallie hear reason. He was the head of the house; he was the last of his generation, being the brother of old Miss Kimball, younger than she by twenty years. He was a widower, and childless, and lived by himself in the huge house in the double block of grounds next to old Miss Kimball's double block, and was considered by his position peculiarly fitted for the task.

Mrs. Miner came to him—his niece. Mrs. Miner was three months younger than he, a beautiful, gray-haired woman, at present inclined to be tearful.

"Sallie could live with us perfectly well," said Mrs. Miner. "There is plenty of room"—Mrs. Miner had seven children: boys in their college days, girls ranging from the coming-out period down—"and she won't."

Mrs. Osborne came—another niece, sister of Mrs. Miner. Mrs. Osborne had eight children and another big house, and was filled with indignation.

"Sallie ought to be spanked," Mrs. Osborne declared to Uncle John. "Why can't she be rational and come and stay with us?"

Mr. Miner and Mr. Osborne came, too; sauntering over in the evening with clouded faces to smoke thoughtful cigars with Uncle John—they each wanted to give Sallie an allowance, and she would not take it—and at all hours of the day young Miners and Osbornes came stamping in—healthy, handsome, and vociferous; some of them twenty-five, some of them ten—and they each and all complained to Uncle John of Sallie.

Sallie said she was no relation. Ridiculous statement! Had not Great-grandfather Kimball married her little, widowed twenty-year-old mother three months before he died—and he had really meant all along to adopt Sallie legally, and only happened to have put it off too long. Sallie was really their great-aunt—along with Uncle John—said the young Miners and Osbornes.

And, then, was it Sallie's fault that Sallie's mother had let herself be swindled out of the money Great-grandfather Kimball had left her, and died without a penny less than two years after he did, that Sallie need put on such airs about taking any more money out of the Kimball family? And as for Aunt Kimball's taking her and bringing her up, and saying *she* was going to adopt her, and then not doing it, and leaving everything to some old frump they none of them had ever heard of—why, didn't they think it was an awfully shabby trick, and weren't they willing to smash the will for Sallie? And here was Sallie going around with her nose in the air, as though it

were all their fault, and refusing to come and live with them.

Little Dick Osborne, aged twelve, was particularly grieved over Sallie.

"I wanted to adopt her," he told Uncle John, "and she won't let me. Why don't you do what you ought to? Don't you see she's just hanging round, waiting for you to ask her to come and be your girl?"

And then Uncle John, flushing to the roots of his hair, confessed that he had asked Sallie to come and live with him, first of all, the very day he read his sister's will, and that he wanted to adopt her legally—and that she would none of him.

"She's promised to come and take dinner with me twice a week, though," Uncle John added, brightening. "And that's something."

Last of all came Clifford. Clifford was Uncle John's law partner and great-nephew; an orphan, first cousin to the various young Miners and Osbornes, a good-looking fellow on the happy side of thirty, and a person of much influence.

Clifford was but just back from the East, where he had been interviewing the Kay Kimball whose wrecked life old Miss Kimball had determined to rivet up with gold—for Uncle John and he had been appointed executors by the terms of the will, and Uncle John was not inclined to act, unless sure of not being too patently interfered with by this new and unwelcome client—and in the twenty-four hours since his return the young man had been devoting himself to Sallie.

Now he was dining with Uncle John.

"And so," he announced over the soup, "I marched her over to Aunt Miner's, and they thrashed the whole matter over again. Aunt Miner said the room was there, so there wouldn't be any extra expense about that. And the washing was done in the house by the laundress, so there wasn't any extra expense about *that*. And, as for food—but here Sallie broke in, and said that no amount of eloquence was going to convince her that food didn't cost money; and then Aunt Miner said that

at the very most it wouldn't cost more than ten dollars a month extra, and that, if Sallie was so set on not being under obligations to any one, she could pay that out of the twenty-five dollars, interest she gets—I'd gone to Aunt Miner's before and told her it was the only possible way to get Sallie—and so the whole affair was settled."

He waited for the fish to be brought on, and then continued:

"After that you can believe we didn't let the grass grow under our feet. We broached the next division instanter, and, do you know—she accepted. We've been down this afternoon to see about it, and everything's arranged. You've heard about it, I guess."

Uncle John nodded, with a clouded brow. Mrs. Osborne had told him—Sallie couldn't be a governess, and wouldn't be a teacher, and, since she would persist in her absurd intention, there seemed no other way; and it really was the manager who had come to her, Mrs. Osborne, in the first place, and intimated that if Miss Sallie Bean really was going to branch out for herself—he had heard rumors to that effect—he would consider himself fortunate in having her supply the hotel with the jams, and jellies, and pickles, and preserves it needed yearly—provided Miss Bean could turn out the class of article that had made old Miss Kimball's housekeeping famous and set the Woman's Exchange she started on its feet.

Sallie could. She had put up Aunt Kimball's preserves since she was sixteen. She had even taught the women who were to supply the exchange. But to Uncle John there was something horrible in the thought of a girl like Sallie being cooped up for hours, messing over sticky stuff that was to be eaten afterward in a hotel dining-room by any outrageous person who happened to call for it.

But Uncle John was not asked for his opinion, and did not express it—and Sallie started out on her career. It was a mild enough start, as this was early spring and the rush could not begin until summer brought the fruit and berries. But Portland heard of it, and, of

course, held up its hands in horror. Who would have thought it! The Kimballs to allow it! Sallie, to think of it!

This finished Sallie. Portland drew vivid pictures of her end as an impossible spinster, and felt grieved because the old Kimball house was shut up and there seemed no prospect of the mysterious Kay Kimball's coming west to occupy it. The two executors entered upon their duties; the will was apparently not to be contested; everything was as flat as possible. And Sallie's performance was the flattest of the lot.

But, though to all appearances her life was hopelessly and forever eclipsed, the Kimball clan was still discovering continued cause for alarm in the conduct of Sallie; and these causes were brought faithfully to the ears of Uncle John.

First, there was her affair with the Harding children. Mrs. Harding was a new woman in the community; very well off. She had taken a house opposite the old Kimball place, seemed inclined toward friendliness, and was suspected, though no one could lay a finger on precise acts, of being pushing. She had two charming little girls and one charming young boy; but was that any reason why Sallie should teach those children to dance—for pay? Mrs. Harding was anxious to have them learn at once and did not dare send them to the dancing school on account of a measles epidemic. But what concern was that of the Kimballs? Leaving the odious money phrase of the matter to one side, this act of Sallie's had obliged Mrs. Miner and Mrs. Osborne to go at once and call on Mrs. Harding, a thing they had not at all intended doing—for the present.

Then, as though the Harding episode was not enough, Sallie suddenly took to plunging around the country on the most unmanageable horses of Lessington's livery stable. She would be off for whole afternoons, scouring the countryside—the wooded ranges back of town and the long levels across the river—and come back at night, shaking the raindrops from her hair, dangling Indian baskets from her side,

and reeling off yards of Chinook in praise of her strong-scented wares.

"It's a shame for that child to spend the little money she has on such trash," lamented Mrs. Miner, who had come over on this occasion to add her wail to Mrs. Osborne's burst of indignation. "And I know those horses will be the death of her. But the worst of it is that she should be breaking them to the sidesaddle for Lessington—for pay."

"I shall be very glad," said Mrs. Osborne, "when summer comes and she will have to settle down to work. At least, it will keep her out of mischief."

But the climax came when Sallie took up with Giffing, the real estate man. This was too much even for Clifford, who until then had stood by, edified, although not strictly approving, and refused to interfere. Clifford heard the rumor, saw the two coming back from a horseback ride together one afternoon, and betook himself hot haste to Uncle John.

"This won't do," Clifford said, decidedly. "She never seemed that kind of a girl, so I never thought about it before. But, really, you know, this can't go on. Why, she might fall in love with him—and, I assure you, he's not that kind at all."

Uncle John brightened up wonderfully. He had not looked so contented in a long time.

"I don't see what you're going to do about it," he said, cheerfully. "Sallie's of age and not exactly amenable to reason. However, come and take dinner with us to-night, and we'll see what can be done."

So when Sallie, sauntering unconcernedly under an umbrella, appeared at Uncle John's that evening, there was Clifford to make the third at table.

And, "Again to the lecture platform!" mocked Sallie, when Clifford approached the obnoxious real estate agent by the circuitous route of the Harding dancing lessons.

"Can't you see that it's much more to my credit to be supporting myself than to be a lady pauper on your hands? And I can't teach things I don't know about, can I?"

"She had no business to approach you on the subject," growled Clifford.

"She never. The children happened to mention it on the street one day, and I told them I could teach them fast enough; and it was only after that that Mrs. Harding spoke to me about it—and in such a nice way, too."

"Oh! And I suppose, then, that Lessington didn't ask you to break those confounded horses of his, either. You went and begged him to let you."

Clifford was finding it difficult to reach the point at which he was aiming, and Uncle John was not of the least assistance. Uncle John merely sat by and smiled.

"Well, not exactly," Sallie admitted. "It wouldn't have done—with a livery stable keeper, you know. I had to manage. Lessington thinks it's all his tact. He's *too* proud of himself."

Clifford and Uncle John begged to be enlightened; and Sallie was complaisant to that extent.

Mrs. Harding, it seemed, had an elder son at Harvard. He was coming home this summer, and some of Mrs. Harding's eastern friends were coming with him.

"What we should really like to do," Mrs. Harding had said to Sallie, "is to stay quietly here in town, instead of piling off to the seashore, make boating excursions up and down the river, and have riding parties over this beautiful country of yours. But, as we have no stable here and I sold off all the horses before coming"—Mrs. Harding was a widow—"and Lessington's horses aren't considered reliable for ladies—well, it may come to my having to build a stable after all," she ended, laughing; and Sallie repeated the conversation to little Dick Osborne.

Dick was an ardent admirer of Sallie's, and an ardent admirer of Lessington's; Lessington—and Mr. Osborne—had been the means of procuring him an Indian pony not long since, and the stableman was in high favor accordingly. Exactly how much unconscious coaching Dick had received, Sallie did not disclose; suffice it to say that the child went to Lessington, quite worried

in his mind, to point out how much money his friend was losing by not having all his riding horses properly broken to the sidesaddle, that he bragged about Sallie's equine ability—there was no need for this, as it was already a by-word in Portland—and Lessington posted off to Mrs. Harding to learn whether his animals would be definitely engaged, provided he could reduce them to order, and, learning that they would, had prevailed upon little Dick to approach Sallie on the subject. After a certain amount of holding back, Sallie consented to ride his horses all spring and have them in proper shape by June—for fifty dollars.

Sallie was evidently quite pleased with herself. She told of the glorious rides she was having, of the beautiful country she was growing familiar with; and when she had finished expatiating on these themes, she launched forth on that all-absorbing topic, the prospective golf club. Would it really be put through? How strange there had never been one before. And where did Clifford think would be the best place for the links?

Clifford had pronounced ideas on this subject; and, in view of Uncle John's derisive smile, decided to talk golf for the present, and admonish Sallie later concerning the obnoxious Giffing.

Afterward, on thinking it over, he determined to say nothing at all at present; for the riotous June was upon them; the fruits of the field would soon be flooding the markets, and Sallie would be busy. Also, Sallie had promised to spend any spare days she might have in piloting Mrs. Harding's enormous house party—just arrived from the East—over the country; she would plainly have so much to do that any thought she might have entertained of real estate Giffing must necessarily slip from her mind.

But, lest this should not be so, Clifford accompanied her himself on the last rides she took on Lessington's now well-broken horses, and, having been made one of the committee with whom decision rested, even went to the length of consulting her on the best site for the golf links.

Then, convinced that the purpose at which he had been aiming had been triumphantly fulfilled, convinced, also, that the golf links' committee could make its final arrangements without him, Clifford took ten days off to go fishing, returned to be instantly inveigled into accompanying one of Mrs. Harding's excursions up to the Dalles, and discovered with indignant amazement that Giffing, too, was one of the party.

On his return he went to Uncle John about it. How had the unspeakable real estate dealer become thus smugly installed in the Harding clique? As for Sallie—

"I was with them for two days," said Clifford, "and I had ample opportunity for observation; but I assure you the actions of Sallie are beyond me. I don't see what she's driving at—unless it's a peculiarly grotesque attempt at flirtation."

It will be seen from this that Clifford had lost his temper.

Sallie had spent hours with Mrs. Harding, he admitted; but between whiles she had altogether too much to say to Giffing, who was having the time of his life and showed plainly that no one had ever taken the least notice of him before; and when she was not dawdling around with Giffing, she was exchanging inanities with young Harding, who was trying to do the heavy devoted to a girl of Mrs. Harding's house party and at the same time make a killing with Sallie.

"And what about this girl you speak of?" inquired Uncle John, hugely interested.

"That's a queer thing," Clifford told him. "Her name is Louisiana McClung; she's made herself auburn hair; and for a man who cares for that style of woman she's exactly the thing. Young Harding, from what I gathered, has been altogether smitten for the past six months—so much so, in fact, one of the older ladies confided to me, that he asked her to come out here when the house party was being got up without ever consulting his mother beforehand, and Mrs. Harding, who did not want her at all, had to write and second the

invitation in order to save appearances. Now, he's cooling off—on account of Sallie—and yet, strange to say, Sallie doesn't seem to have drawn the wrath of this auburn-haired Louisiana down upon herself. They're as chummy as possible, take long walks by themselves. Come to think of it, I didn't have one walk with Sallie the whole trip, not one."

"Which one of those two men d'you think Sallie'll take?" Uncle John wondered, dreamily, whereat Clifford became altogether furious and refused to be pacified by an invitation to dine the next evening.

"I shall have to be downtown until late," he explained, stiffly. "The golf club decided on the site for the links while I was away and entered into a contract to buy a lot for a clubhouse. I don't know exactly where it is, but there are some last points that have to be settled. It will take all afternoon and evening probably. I can't possibly come."

Come he did, however, the next afternoon, bursting onto Uncle John's porch—Uncle John always left the office at one during the summer—in a state of mingled rage and breathlessness that ought to have rendered him speechless.

"They're married," he choked, "actually married, Giffing"—Uncle John turned a rich cream-color—"and that McClung girl. Unitarian clergyman, at two to-day; then left for Seattle. It's out already, downtown, in the evening papers."

Then did Uncle John arise in his wrath and prepare to slay his great-nephew and law partner; but Clifford had not time to listen.

"I'll break that Giffing's neck," he sputtered. "Don't you see the position he's put Sallie in? People'll be saying now that he jilted her. Besides, I've just found out it's his land the golf club has leased for its links, and it's too late to back out. How was I to know he was the Gordon Real Estate Company? It's too sickening."

After that they were constrained to calm down; for Sallie had appeared at the other end of a wide lawn—great ex-

panse of white linen, white flapping hat, fluffy white parasol—making her leisurely progress from a side entrance hidden in shrubbery half a block away.

"I've been to the wedding," she announced as soon as she was within speaking distance. "I was maid of honor and best man and six ushers. I couldn't manage an old shoe; but I had five pounds of rice in my parasol."

She flapped the parasol open and shut as she mounted the steps. She looked altogether buoyant and successful. There was no air about her of one who wears the willow, and the two men glared indignantly. Uncle John summoned an awful voice from inner depths and invited her to explain; and Sallie settled herself on the top step, took off her hat, and told her tale.

"It started—well, I don't know exactly how it did start," said Sallie. "But Mrs. Harding was crazy, quite, for fear her precious son would marry Miss McClung; and Mr. Giffing was crazy for fear the golf links would go onto that tract north, instead of across the river where there's a lot of land he's handling. And so he came to me and said he'd give me a hundred dollars if I'd get the club to rent off his tract—he said Lessington told him I could manage it if I wanted to—and Mrs. Harding cried one afternoon and said she'd give anything to get her son out of Miss McClung's clutches.

"I told Mr. Giffing his proposition wouldn't be worth my while—considering I had my living to make—unless he'd give me a lot over there in addition to the hundred, provided I succeeded; and I told Mrs. Harding I thought her difficulty could be settled easily enough, if one had the time and didn't have to work for one's living—or something like that. Then Mr. Giffing said he'd give me the lot—I got his promise in writing before a notary—and Mrs. Harding said she'd give me five hundred dollars if I'd extricate darling Jack."

At this point Clifford sat bolt upright and became very red.

"After that it was really very simple. Mr. Giffing was tickled to death to have

me introduce him to Mrs. Harding; Jack Harding was rude to him, which helped along wonderfully; I told him how many men wanted to marry Miss McClung, and especially Jack Harding; and that settled *him*. Then I told Miss McClung he was the coming man in Portland, and how much money he was making, and she got it into her head that I liked him—we used to go walking together and talk about it—and that settled *her*. I told her, too, that Jack hadn't any money of his own—only what his mother chooses to give him.

"Then all I had to do was to get you out of the way, Clifford, so that you wouldn't find out who the Gordon Real Estate Company really was until everything was settled, as you don't seem to care for Mr. Giffing, and the rest of the committee liked his land. But you went off fishing and saved me the trouble; and when you came back, Mrs. Harding was only too pleased to insist that you had to be one of her party to the Dalles. I told her you were wild to go, but were *so shy*."

"Beautiful!" said Clifford—his face was still very red. "And how does young Harding figure in all this? What did you tell him?"

Sallie looked puzzled.

"That's a thing I don't understand. I didn't tell him anything—only listened to him talk about himself. It was a bore—rather. He did it by the hour—and Mr. Giffing went walking with Louisiana McClung. He went walking with her so much he forgot to figure out that golf players might like to own a clubhouse, and I sold the lot he deeded me to your committee for three hundred dollars. I'm to have the money as soon as you've examined the title, Clifford."

Sallie fell into smiling silence, sticking hatpins into the hat on her knee and musing on the features of the past campaign.

Clifford could not stand it any longer. He leaned forward anxiously.

"Sallie—Sallie, you're *not* going to take that five hundred from Mrs. Harding?"

"Isn't it a shame?" sighed Sallie. "No; I can't; of course. But that just shows, doesn't it, how easy it is to make money?"

Clifford sank back with a sigh of relief; and Uncle John, nearly as anxious as his nephew, stammered: "I hope, my dear, that you will be judicious in the expenditure of this money you have—made. That new craze of yours for Indian baskets, now—"

"Good gracious, Uncle John, I'm not crazy over Indian baskets," laughed Sallie. "Mrs. Harding said, way early this spring, that her friends were mad on the subject, and the two keenest had a silly hobby not to buy a single one unless they'd seen the place it'd been made. So I took them around to the villages over behind there"—Sallie nodded vaguely in the direction of the hills—"and I told them what fine baskets the tribe made and what beauties I'd got—only there weren't any there; for the women had left for the canneries, and I'd bought nearly everything anyway. You needn't worry about my craze. I haven't a basket to bless myself with—except a couple Clifford gave me years ago—I sold them every one to Mrs. Harding's friends. Cleared over seventy-five dollars."

Uncle John collapsed; but presently rallied sufficiently to murmur that there would be remarks when Aunt Miner and Aunt Osborne learned the capacity in which Sallie had been officiating that afternoon.

"I know it," sympathized Sallie. "It's too bad. But I had to be in at the wind-up. I really did, Uncle John. I wouldn't have missed it for a farm. It was lovely."

"What d'you suppose they did it for?" Clifford asked, absently. He was plainly thinking of other things, though.

"Did it for?" Oh, married that way, you mean? Miss McClung did it for a slap at Mrs. Harding, I guess; and Mr. Giffing? He did it because he didn't know any better and thought he'd cut a dash. And they both of them did it because they're that kind. Do you know, Jack Harding kissed my hand when I

told him—I've just come from there—he seemed so relieved. And his mother looked *too funny*—”

But Clifford suddenly shot forward in his seat, interrupting.

“I've gone over the whole ground,” he said, briskly; “and there is one point on which I should like enlightenment. Everything else is plain, even to the humiliating truth that you educated me into going to Aunt Miner and telling her that you would stay with her if you could pay board—I thought until now that I'd managed that myself. Sallie, how did that manager happen to go to Aunt Osborne and beg that you honor

the hotel by making its preserves and things?”

“I asked him to,” said Sallie.

The two men gazed down at her in respectful silence. There was that air of peace about her which envelops those who, having worked industriously throughout the week, rest with a clear conscience on the seventh day. After a while Uncle John asked in an awed voice:

“And what do you propose to do now, Sallie?”

“Now—oh, now—” Sallie looked up dreamily. “Now, I'll make jam,” said Sallie.



TO THE VALLEY

AS one who thirsting sinks beside a spring
 The crystal draught to drink and drink again—
 So doth my heart of thy wide beauty drain
 A cup of sweet content: while soft winds bring
 Wafts of the buckwheat in its blossoming
 From patches white, flanked high by golden grain.
 Heavy with promise of the harvest wain;
 And summer slips away on floating wing.

O lovely valley when the shadows fall
 In length'ning gloom athwart Life's little Day,
 And the Night comes as it will come to all—
 Who knows but that the Heavenly Morn may show
 Beauties so like to thine that I shall go
 With step assured as though I knew the way.

ROSLIE ARTHUR.

THE FOG OF IGNORANCE

By M. H. Vorse

CHARACTERS:

MR. BLAKE, a young author, who deems himself a realist.

ALICE BLAKE, his wife; blond, slender; innocent blue eyes. She has a guileless, almost childish manner. With her gentle, dependent air she reminds one of a pre-Raphaelite saint.

PEGGY WILMERDING, Alice's intimate friend; petite, more assertive and self-reliant than Alice. She gives the impression of a very impulsive little person. Her gray eyes have a look of perpetual wonder. Both girls are of the type toward which men instinctively adopt a half-protective, half-patronizing manner.

SCENE: MR. BLAKE'S study. The usual litter of papers, manuscripts, books, etc.

MR. BLAKE (walking up and down, restlessly)—One can't be delicate enough with such a theme. It's hard to express the curious, mystic, half-life of the young girl. Clear as crystal, and yet seeing the whole world through the opalescent fog of her own divine ignorance. (He sits down at the desk and writes, at first rather slowly, with frequent pauses; afterwards, becoming absorbed, he goes ahead rapidly.)

(Noise of laughter and talk without. A rap on the door. MR. BLAKE doesn't hear. Sound of giggling without.)

(Enter ALICE, pulling by the hand PEGGY, who hangs back shamefacedly. MR. BLAKE looks up, half-impatient, half-smiling.)

ALICE (breathlessly)—Oh, Alfred, what do you think Peggy's been up to! Writing stories, if you please—(archly)—and at your inspiration, too!

PEGGY (protesting)—Oh, Alice!

ALICE—And she wants you to criticise it, and then we'll send it to a big magazine. It will be all your doing, Al-

fred, dear! (Kissing PEGGY.) Oh, Peggy, won't it be grand!

PEGGY—It would be awfully good, if you would, Mr. Blake. Only I want a real criticism; your candid opinion, not compliments.

ALICE (gancing at the pile of manuscripts in front of MR. B.)—I hope we're not interrupting you, dear.

MR. BLAKE (repressing a sigh)—Oh, not at all.

PEGGY—I wouldn't interrupt you for the world.

MR. BLAKE (resigned)—I'd be delighted to be of assistance.

ALICE—I knew you would. I've not even heard it myself. I made Peggy come with me at once.

(ALICE draws up chairs, seating herself.)

PEGGY (seating herself)—I'll skip the introduction, to the part I want your advice about. (Shuffles over her manuscript.) It's such a help—you will be honest, won't you? My heroine is at a summer resort. I describe it a little, and all that. Then she meets the hero on the stairs. I'll begin right after that. (Reading:) "Having seen and having determined to know Donald, Miriam

bided her time. There were other girls at the hotel—there always were other girls—”

MR. BLAKE (*interrupting, rather timidly*)—One moment, please—”Having seen and having determined to know”—isn’t that phrase a little clumsy—not much, you know—

PEGGY—No; it puts into concise language just what I meant to say.

MR. BLAKE (*appealing to his wife*)—But, does a nice young woman, a young woman of breeding, and all that—does she determine to meet an unknown man?

ALICE (*in innocent, surprised tones*)—In summer resorts any girl may determine to do anything, no matter what.

PEGGY—And it showed she was a girl of spirit, to have energy enough to determine to do anything after a course of summer hotel.

MR. BLAKE (*entirely floored*)—Oh!

PEGGY (*continuing*)—”Other girls at the hotel. There always are other girls.”

MR. BLAKE (*nervously*)—I beg your pardon again; but it’s your fault if I interrupt. You wanted me to—

PEGGY (*tolerantly*)—Fire away!

MR. BLAKE—I can’t quite see the force of repeating: “There always are other girls.” Why are there?

PEGGY—Don’t you know; the crowds and crowds of stupid things one never looks at?

ALICE—Yes, the girls that *seem* all right at first sight, but are really queer.

MR. BLAKE (*with raised eyebrows*)—Queer?

ALICE—Oh, not that sort of thing at all, Alfred; just plain *frump* girls. The kind one never notices.

MR. BLAKE—Why?

PEGGY—Just stupid girls, who don’t know any one, and can’t do things.

ALICE—Such bores!

PEGGY—Horrible clothes!

MR. BLAKE—I never noticed—

ALICE (*with scorn*)—A man never knows the difference—at first.

PEGGY—I’ve seen the nicest men taken in.

ALICE—But not for long!

PEGGY—Oh, that depends; if there is no one *really* nice for a contrast. I’ve known such *really* nice boys to go to all lengths—get engaged, or even married.

MR. BLAKE—Perhaps we had better go on with the story. My work—

ALICE (*to PEGGY, without noticing MR. BLAKE*)—How dreadful!

PEGGY—You can imagine what a blow for their sisters!

MR. BLAKE—It’s nearly noon—

ALICE (*as before, calmly*)—I always watch the girls Tom likes, and when he makes mistakes I make the girl ridiculous.

MR. BLAKE (*with wide-open eyes*)—Make the girl ridiculous?

ALICE—It’s the only way; ridicule kills dead.

PEGGY—Yes; you find the weak point of that kind of a girl quick enough.

ALICE—Then it’s plain sailing; one simply uses it.

MR. BLAKE (*shocked*)—I can’t imagine you, Alice, casting ridicule—

PEGGY (*indignantly*)—Casting ridicule! Alice never in all her life—

ALICE (*to MR. BLAKE, patiently*)—You don’t quite understand, dear. One only gets the girl to do some absurd thing. That sort of girl always over-reaches herself.

MR. BLAKE (*suddenly illuminated*)—For instance: one gets a girl to talk literature before a man who is supposed to know something about it, and the girl confides she always did “love Carlyle for his clear and lucid style.” I see.

ALICE (*a little ill at ease*)—But—

PEGGY (*sees something is wrong and comes to the rescue very vivaciously*)—Oh, Alice! do you remember that horrid, fat Parker girl that Tom fancied? The girl who let men hold her hand, and all sorts of dreadful things? How you cured Tom of his fancy for her? (*To MR. BLAKE:*) It was the greatest fun! There was an immense, big, fat sofa-cushion—

ALICE—It looked just like Annie Parker, that sofa cushion!

PEGGY (*with emphasis*)—It did, indeed! And its cover was just like the

clothes the Parker girl used to wear! Alice called that sofa-cushion "Annie," and whenever Tom came into the room she would talk to it and pretend to be holding its hand.

ALICE—Tom got so furious! Do you remember that night, on the piazza?

PEGGY (*to Mr. Blake*)—That was the best of the whole affair. Alice knew Tom had been to the Parkers', and when she heard him coming she turned the light out and sat in the hammock with her arm around that old, vulgar cushion.

ALICE—Tom heard me murmuring tender nothings. He's very particular about me—

PEGGY—He turned on the light! There sat Alice, spooning away with the cushion!

ALICE—And Peggy near by, howling with joy!

PEGGY—He didn't wait to say good-evening!

ALICE—But it made him sick enough of the Parker girl.

PEGGY (*meditatively*)—But some girls are good backgrounds. Now, my heroine uses all the other girls that way. Where was I? (*Looks for her place*.)

MR. BLAKE (*weakly*)—I really ought to finish—

ALICE (*reproachfully*)—When you promised to help us!

MR. BLAKE—You don't seem to be suffering for aid of any sort.

PEGGY (*reading*)—"Since the time when their eyes had met squarely on the staircase—"

MR. BLAKE (*interrupting*)—Can't you put that in a little different form?—"Since the time when their eyes had met squarely on the stairway?"

PEGGY—Well, it was on the stairway, wasn't it, that their eyes met squarely?

ALICE (*who has been humming "Large and square"*)—I don't see anything wrong with that. Alfred, dear, if you are in a hurry to get to work, why waste time over details?

MR. BLAKE (*persistently*)—Your phrase gives a wrong impression.

PEGGY (*politely*)—Have you anything else to say about the story so far?

Otherwise, I'll go on. (*Reading*) "Since the time their eyes had met squarely on the staircase, during which glance Miriam had seen that Donald was, first of all, one of her own set, that he admired her intensely, and that he was a Harvard man, she had apparently been entirely unconscious of his presence. She studied his habits and his manners toward other girls, and, while apparently keeping out of his way, tactfully contrived to meet him a dozen times a day."

MR. BLAKE—Do girls do such things?

PEGGY (*a little defiantly*)—I never pretended my heroine was a *Ladies' Companion* young person. Beside, this is realism!

MR. BLAKE (*aside*)—The devil it is! (*Aloud*.) But I didn't suppose girls—nice girls—went out of their way to meet men.

ALICE—She was bored, poor thing; and then, she took good care not to let him see she did it purposely.

MR. BLAKE (*aside*)—How lovely is artlessness! (*Aloud*.) Will you tell me how she could know he was a Harvard man, and that he admired her, and all those things?

ALICE—Why, she just had ordinary intelligence!

MR. BLAKE—Oh!

PEGGY—One can always tell a Harvard man!

MR. BLAKE (*who is from Yale*)—Oh!

PEGGY (*continuing*)—"This, she knew, would give her an immense advantage over all the other girls, when she at last was properly introduced to him"—Alice always did it that way. It was one of her strong points.

MR. BLAKE—Indeed!

PEGGY (*continuing*)—"She watched carefully to see if he talked to any of the older women, so she could make her acquaintance."

MR. BLAKE—Why didn't one of the other girls introduce her? (*The two girls look at each other in pity for his innocence*.)

ALICE (*gently, as one would explain something to a child*)—Girls of that

class never introduce a man to another girl, dear.

PEGGY—And mighty few other girls will, for that matter!

MR. BLAKE (*to Peggy*)—Go on!

PEGGY—“But, alas, there was no such way! So Miriam took a desperate step. She took a large pile of books and drawing materials, and, on entering the parlor, where Donald was reading, she stumbled, purposely. The things fell to the floor with a crash. Donald sprang forward to quickly help Miriam—”

MR. BLAKE—You've split your infinitive!

PEGGY—Have I? How lovely! I always wanted to split an infinitive, but I never knew how!

MR. BLAKE (*aside, discouraged*)—Wanted to split an infinitive! (*Aloud.*) Why, may I ask, Miss Wilmerding?

PEGGY—Oh, it's so unconventional, and all that! It makes me feel like a real author!

ALICE (*who stiffened visibly during the last few sentences*)—I don't mind your split infinitives, but, really, Peggy, I think it was not at all a nice thing for her to do, to scrape an acquaintance in such a way, realism or no realism!

MR. BLAKE—Is that any worse than—

ALICE (*gently, but decisively*)—It's quite a different thing! I don't think it's nice.

PEGGY (*flushing hotly*)—I don't see, either, why it's any worse than getting old ladies to introduce you, or—

ALICE (*still gentle, but more decisive*)—One must draw the line some-

where, and I don't think a girl who respects herself will purposely scrape an acquaintance. To get oneself introduced, that is another thing.

PEGGY (*flushed*)—It's all very well for you, Alice, who always had Tom about to introduce any man, to talk that way.

ALICE (*distinctly annoyed*)—Who would introduce me, if not my own brother?

PEGGY—And the old lady dodge I learned from you.

MR. BLAKE (*aside*)—The old lady dodge! And from Alice!

ALICE (*with dignity*)—It's hardly kind of you, Peggy—

PEGGY—And, beside that, I've seen you stand and stand around, looking so innocently indifferent—

ALICE (*with suspicious sweetness, rising*)—Alfred, dear, did you not say you had some work to do? Peggy, I think we oughtn't to interrupt Alfred any longer.

PEGGY (*also with suspicious sweetness*)—It would be better another time.

MR. BLAKE (*with deep meaning*)—Your story has interested me very much, Miss Wilmerding.

(*He rises and opens the door for them, and stands a moment looking after them.*)

MR. BLAKE (*turning to his desk*)—I was writing something about the opalescent fog of divine ignorance!

(*Contemplatively tears up the manuscript he has just written.*)

CURTAIN.

THE BRUTE

By E. Nesbit

Author of "The Lie Absolute," "The Force of Habit," "The Red House," Etc.

THE pearl of the dawn was not yet dissolved in the gold cup of the sunshine, but in the northwest the drifting opal waves were ebbing fast to the horizon, and the sun was already half out of his couch of dull crimson.

She leaned out of her window. By fortunate chance it was a jasmine-muffled lattice, as a girl's window should be, and looked down on the dewy stillness of the garden.

The cloudy shadows that had clung in the earliest dawn about the lilac bushes and rhododendrons had faded like gray ghosts, and slowly on lawn and bed and path new black shadows were deepening and intensifying.

She drew a deep breath. What a picture! The green garden, the awakened birds, the roses that still looked asleep, the scented jasmine stars! She saw and loved it all.

Nor was she unduly insensible to the charm of the central figure, the girl in the white lace-trimmed gown who leaned her soft arms on the window-sill and looked out on the dawn with large, dark eyes—herself.

Of course she knew that her eyes were large and dark, also that her hair was now at its prettiest, rumpled and tumbled from the pillow, and far prettier so than one dared to allow it to be in the daytime.

It seemed a pity that there was no one in the garden save the birds, no one who had awakened thus early just that he might gather a rose and cover it with kisses and throw it up to the window of his pretty sweetheart.

She had but recently learned that she was pretty. It was on the evening af-

ter the little dance at the rectory. She had worn red roses at her neck, and when she had let down her hair she had picked up the roses from her dressing table and stuck them in the loose rough brown mass, and stared into the glass till she was half mesmerized by her own dark eyes. She had come to herself with a start, and then she had known quite surely that she was pretty enough to any one's sweetheart.

When she was a child a well-meaning aunt had told her that as she would never be pretty or clever she had better try to be good, or no one would love her. She had tried, and she had never till that red-rose day doubted that such goodness as she had achieved must be her only claim to love. Now she knew better, and she looked out of her window at the brightening sky and the deepening shadows. But there was no one to throw her a rose with kisses on it.

"If I were a man," she said to herself, but in a very secret shadowy corner of her inmost heart, and in a wordless whisper, "if I were a man I would go out this minute and find a sweetheart. She should have dark eyes, too, and rough brown hair and pink cheeks."

In the outer chamber of her mind she said, briskly:

"It's a lovely morning. It's a shame to waste it indoors; I'll go out."

The sun was full up when she stole down through the still sleeping house and out into the garden, now as awake as a lady in full dress at the court of the king.

The garden gate swung behind her, and the swing of her white skirts went down the green lane. On such a morn-

ing, who would not wear white? She walked with the quick grace of her nineteen years, and as she went fragments of the undigested poetry that had been her literary diet for the last two years rose to her brain.

"With tears and smiles from Heaven again,
The maiden spring upon the plain
Came in a sunlit fall of rain,"

and so on, though this was July and not spring at all. And

"A man had given all other bliss
And all his worldly work for this
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips."

Her own lips were not perfect, yet; as lips went, they were well enough, and anyway kisses would not be wasted on them.

She went down the lane, full of the anxious, trembling longing that is youth's unrecognized joy, and at the corner, where the lane meets the high white road, she met him. That is to say, she stopped short, as the whispering silence of the morning was broken by a sudden rattle and a heavy thud, not pleasant to hear. And he, and his bicycle fell together, six yards from her feet. The bicycle bounded, and twisted, and settled itself down with bold, resentful clatterings. The man lay quite still.

Her Tennyson quotations were swept away. She ran to help.

"Oh, are you hurt?" she said. He lay quite still. There was blood on his head, and one arm was doubled under his back. What could she do? She tried to lift him from the road to the grass edge of it. He was a big man, but she did succeed in raising his shoulders, and freeing that right arm. As she lifted it he groaned. She sat down in the dust of the road, and lowered his shoulders till his head lay on her lap. Then she tied her handkerchief around his head, and waited till some one should pass on the way to work.

Three men and a boy came after the long half hour in which he lay uncon-

scious, the red patch on her handkerchief spreading slowly, and she looked at him and got by heart every line of the pale, worn, handsome face. She spoke to him, she stroked his hair. She touched his white cheek with her finger tips, and wondered about him, and pitied him, and took possession of him as a new and precious appanage of her life, so that when the laborers appeared, she said:

"He's very badly hurt. Go and fetch some more men and a hurdle, and the boy might run for the doctor. Tell him to come to the White House. It's nearest, and it may be dangerous to move him farther."

"The White Lion ain't but a furlong farther, miss," said one of the men, touching his cap.

"It's much more than that," said she, who had but the vaguest notion of a furlong's length. "Do go and do what I tell you."

They went, remorselessly dissecting as they went, with the bluntest instruments, her motives and her sentiments. It was not hidden from them, that wordless whisper in the shadowy inner chamber of her heart.

"Perhaps the White Lion isn't so very much farther, but I can't give him up. No, I can't." But it was almost hidden from *her*. In her mind's outer hall she said: "I'm sure I ought to take him home. No girl in a book would hesitate. And I can make it all right with mother. It would be cruel to give him up to strangers."

Deep in her heart the faint whisper followed:

"I found him; he's mine; I won't let him go."

He stirred a little before they came back with the hurdle, and she took his uninjured hand and pressed it firmly and kindly, and told him it was "all right"; he would feel better presently.

She did have him carried home, and when the doctor had set the arm and the collar bone, and had owned that it would be better not to move him at present, she knew that her romance would not be cut short just yet.

She did not nurse him, because it is

only in books that young girls of the best families act as sick nurses to gentlemen. But her mother, dear, kind, clever, foolish, gentle woman, did the nursing, and the daughter gathered flowers daily to brighten his room. And when he was better, yet still not well enough to resume the bicycle tour, so sharply interrupted by a flawed nut, she read to him, and talked to him, and sat with him in the hushed August garden.

Up to this point, observe, her interest had been purely romantic. He was a man of forty-five. Perhaps he had a younger brother, a splendid young man, and he would like her because she had been kind. He had lived long abroad, had no relatives in England. He knew her Cousin Reginald at Johannesburg—every one knew every one else out there. The brother—there really was a brother—would come some day to thank her mother for all her goodness, and *she* would be at the window, and look down, and he would look up, and the lamp of life would be lighted. She longed, with heart-whole earnestness, to be in love with some one, for as yet she was only in love with love.

But on the evening when there was a full moon—the time of madness as everybody knows—her mother falling asleep after dinner in her cushioned chair in the lamp-lit drawing-room, he and she wandered out into the garden. They sat on the seat under the great apple tree. He was talking gently of kindness and gratitude, and of how he would soon be well enough to go away. She listened in silence, and presently he grew silent, too, under the spell of the moonlight. She never knew exactly how it was that he took her hand, but he was holding it gently, strongly, as if he would never let it go. Their shoulders touched. The silence grew deeper and deeper. She sighed involuntarily; not because she was unhappy, but because her heart was beating so fast. Both were looking straight before them into the moonlight. Suddenly he turned, put his other hand on her shoulder, and kissed her on the lips. At that instant her mother called her, and she went into the lamplight. She said good-night at

once. She wanted to be alone to realize the great and wonderful awakening of her nature, its awakening to love—for this was love, the love the poets sang about.

"A kiss, a touch, the charm was snapped."

She wanted to be alone to think about him. But she did not think. She hugged to her heart the physical memory of that strong, magnetic hand-clasp, the touch of those smooth, sensitive lips on hers—held it close to her till she fell asleep, still thrilling with the ecstasy of her first lover's kiss.

Next day they were formally engaged, and now her life became an intermittent delirium. She longed always to be alone with him, to touch his hands, to feel his cheek against hers. She could not understand the pleasure which he said he felt in just sitting near her and watching her sewing or reading, as he talked to her mother of dull things, politics, and the war, and landscape gardening. If she had been a man, she said to herself, always far down in her heart, she would have found a way at least to sit near the beloved, so that hands might meet now and then unseen. But he disliked public demonstrations, and he loved her. She, however, was merely in love with him.

That was why, when he went away, she found it so difficult to write to him. She thought his letters cold, though they told her of all his work, his aims, ambitions, hopes, because not more than half a page was filled with lover's talk. He could have written very different letters—indeed he had written such in his time, and to more than one address; but he was wise with the wisdom of forty years, and he was beginning to tremble for her happiness because he loved her.

When she complained that his letters were cold he knew that he had been wise. She found it very difficult to write to him. It was far easier to write to Cousin Reginald, who always wrote such long, interesting letters, all about interesting things; Cousin Reginald, who had lived with them at the White House till a year ago, and who knew all

the little family jokes, and the old family worries.

They had been engaged for eight months when he came down to see her without any announcing letter.

She was alone in the drawing-room when he was announced, and, with a cry of joy, she let fall her work on the floor, and ran to meet him with arms outstretched. He caught her wrists.

"No," he said, and the light of joy in her face made it not easy to say it. "My dear, I've come to say something to you, and I mustn't kiss you till I've said it."

The light had died out.

"You're not tired of me?"

He laughed.

"No, not tired of you, my little princess, but I am going away for a year. If you still love me when I come back we'll be married. But before I go I must say something to you."

Her eyes were streaming with tears.

"Oh, how can you be so cruel?" she said, and her longing to cling to him, to reassure herself by personal contact, set her heart beating wildly.

"I don't want to be cruel," he said, "you understand, dear, that I love you, and it's just because I love you that I must say it. Now sit down there and let me speak. Don't interrupt me if you can help it. Consider it a sort of lecture you're bound to sit through."

He pushed her gently toward a chair. She sat down sullenly, awkwardly, and he stood by the window, looking out at the daffodils and early tulips.

"Dear, I am afraid I have found something out. I don't think you love me—"

"Oh, how can you, how can you?"

"Be patient," he said, "I've wondered almost from the first. You're almost a child, and I'm an old man—oh no, I don't mean that that's any reason why you shouldn't love me, but it's a reason for my making very sure that you *do* before I let you marry me. It's your happiness I have to think of most. Now shall I just go away for a year, or shall I speak straight out and tell you everything? If your father were alive I would try to tell him, I can't tell your

mother, she wouldn't understand. You can understand. Shall I tell you?"

"Yes," she said, looking at him with frightened eyes.

"Well; look back. You think you love me. Haven't my letters always bored you a little, though they were about all the things I care for most?"

"I don't understand politics," she said, sullenly.

"And I don't understand needlework, but I could sit and watch you sew forever and a day."

"Well, go on; what other crime have I committed besides not going into raptures over parliament?"

She was growing angry, and he was glad. It is not so easy to hurt people when they are angry.

"And when I am talking to your mother, that bores you too, and when we are alone, you don't care to talk of anything but—but—"

This task was harder than he had imagined possible.

"I've loved you too much, and I've shown it too plainly," she said, bitterly.

"My dear, you've never loved me at all. You have only been in love with me."

"And isn't that the same thing?"

"Oh, it's no use," he cried, "I must be a brute then. No, it's not the same thing. It's your poets and novelists who pretend it is. It's they who have taught you all wrong. It's only half of love, and the worst half, the most untrustworthy, the least lasting. My little girl, when I kissed you first, you were just waking up to your womanhood, you were ready for love, as a flower bud is ready for sunshine, and I happened to be the first man who had the chance to kiss you and hold your dear little hands."

"Do you mean that I should have liked any one else as well if he had only been kind enough to kiss me?"

"No, no, but I wish girls were taught these things out of books. If you only knew what it costs me to be honest with you, how I have been tempted to let you marry me and chance everything! Don't you see you're a woman now—women were made to be kissed, and

when a man behaves like a brute and kisses a girl without even asking first, or finding out first whether she loves him, it's not fair on the girl. I shall never forgive myself. Don't you see I took part of you by storm, the part of you that is just woman nature, not yours, but every one's; and how were you to know that you didn't love me, that it was only the awakening of your woman nature?"

"I hate you," she said, briefly.

"Yes," he answered, simply, "I knew you would. Hate is only one step from passion."

She arose in a fury.

"How dare you use that word to me!" she cried. "Oh, you are a brute! You are quite right; I don't love you, I hate you, I despise you. Oh, you brute!"

"Don't," he said, "I only used that word because it's what people call the thing when it's a man who feels it. With you it's what I said, the unconscious awakening of the womanhood God gave you. Try to forgive me. Have I said anything so very dreadful? It's a very little thing, dear, the sweet kindness you've felt for me. It's nothing to be ashamed or angry about. It's not a hundredth part of what I have felt when you have kissed me. It's because it's such a poor foundation to build a home on that I am frightened for you. Suppose you got tired of my kisses, and there was nothing more in me that you did care for? And that

sort of—lover's love doesn't last forever — without the other kind of love—"

"Oh, don't say any more," she cried, jumping up from her chair. "I did love you with all my heart. I was sorry for you. I thought you were so different. Oh, how could you say these things to me? Go!"

"Shall I come back in a year?" he asked, smiling rather sadly.

"Come back? Never! I'll never speak to you again. I'll never see you again. I hope to God I shall never hear your name again. Go at once!"

"You'll be grateful to me some day," he said, "when you've found out that love, and being in love, are not the same thing."

"What is love, then, the kind of love you'd care for?"

"I care for it all," he said; "I think love is tenderness, esteem, affection, interest, pity, protection and passion. Yes, you needn't be frightened by the word; it is the force that moves the world, but it's only a part of love—oh, I see it's no good. God bless you, child, you'll understand some day."

She does understand now; she has married her Cousin Reginald, and she understands deeply and completely. But she only admits this in that deep, shadowy, almost disowned corner of her heart. In the reception-room of her mind she still thinks of her first lover as "That Brute!"



PLACE AUX DAMES

"YOUR rouge,"—so he wrote—
 "I return with this note.
 To keep it might ticket me shady.
 For naught should be found
 In a gentleman's rooms,
 That could color the cheek of a lady!"

S. P. R. BAYARD.

ENTER MISS HARMSWORTH

By William MacLeod Raine

THEY had been golfing, but were for the moment resting; Miss Tremont sitting on a rustic seat, he lying on the grass at her feet slashing at the tops of some ferns with his midiron. Conversation was at a standstill. Presently he, after several shy attempts, came to coherent speech.

"Do you 'member telling me once that the best thing about our friendship was that it wasn't the least bit sentimental? You were quite sure there was no danger of its being spoiled that way."

She looked at him quickly out of the corner of her eyes.

"Yes, I remember, and you agreed with me."

"Did I? I am not so sure now."

"Nonsense. You aren't going to begin getting silly, are you?" she demanded, sharply.

"'Fraid I am."

Miss Tremont looked properly severe.

"After I had built up such hopes on you, too. I thought you weren't like the others—and now to have you deceive me in the end. It's too bad of you, Bob, to go back on me that way."

"I couldn't help it," he said, humbly.

"What nonsense! Of course you could." Then, as if it had been the measles: "How long have you had it?"

"I'm just catching it. I told you just as soon as I knew it myself."

She stopped chopping holes in the ground with her loftier to take a hopeful view of the situation.

"Maybe you haven't really got it at all. What are your symptoms?"

Denton detailed them at some length. They looked bad.

"Oh, dear me," she groaned. "Is it as serious as all that? Writing poetry

and not sleeping are signs of the worst," she diagnosed.

He looked shyly at her.

"I suppose you don't care in the least."

"Of course I care. You've spoiled everything," she told him, impatiently.

"I mean—for me."

"No—and I don't believe you do either," she added, suspiciously. "You only think it's the proper thing to do."

"It's the eminently proper thing to do for a man of good taste, but that isn't why I did it. Fact is, I couldn't help myself."

"It is very foolish to say that. You'll be blaming me next."

"If you hadn't been around, it would never have happened."

His words gave her pause, and she looked at him fixedly as though struck with an idea.

"I'll tell you what, Bob. You must take something to try to cure yourself."

"But I don't want to be cured."

"You ought to want to," she told him, severely. "And anyway, I want you to get over it. You must take an antidote right away."

"What shall I take—warm mustard water?" he wanted to know.

"No—another girl, of course."

"Am I to fall in love with her?"

"Oh, that isn't necessary. But you must go about with her—get interested in her, you know, and twice a week you may come and report progress to me."

Denton smiled—and obeyed instructions.

At the end of the first week he was able to report considerable progress.

"I picked out Miss Harmsworth because she is the prettiest girl I know,"

he explained. "On Monday we played golf, on Tuesday I took her to the bronco-busting contest, Wednesday we golfed again, then at the hop Friday night I danced with her four times."

"Your case is progressing very favorably. Don't you find you sleep better?"

He blushed. "I'm afraid I do."

"And I suppose you don't think so much about me when I'm not there?"

"No-o, not so much," he admitted.

"You're doing nicely, Bob. On Monday afternoon you may call and report again."

"Awfully sorry, but — er — Miss Harmsworth and I — er — we have an engagement to go boating."

She ought to have been glad, but she wasn't. There was altogether too much Miss Harmsworth in the cure.

"Oh, very well. Don't let me interfere with your engagements," she told him.

And Denton—wise old bird—when he was alone smiled benignly at remembrance of her tilted chin.

During the next fortnight Denton found time only once to make the agreed-upon semi-weekly report, and that was during a hurried five minutes snatched just before he went riding with Miss Harmsworth. He found Miss Tremont very cool and distant. She apparently did not care whether she heard the report or not. Indeed, she intimated pretty plainly that Mr. Denton's affairs of the heart bored her. He retired not in the least discomfited, and devoted himself again assiduously to Miss Harmsworth.

If there had been another eligible man available, Miss Tremont would have made Denton very sick, but as there was none at hand, she did the next best thing—donned her armor and entered the lists against Miss Harmsworth. Then there was war to the knife. Miss Harmsworth did not care anything about Denton—at least she cared a good deal more for another man who was panting for breath through the hot summer in a New York law office—but she didn't propose to surrender him to another girl without a fight. For a

month the lines of battle were drawn, and long before the month was over one of the contestants knew that the result would be a matter of great moment to her, because she was fighting for something much more vital than her vanity. Yet at the best she was not sure that she made more than a drawn battle of it. Then the New York man suddenly appeared on the scene, and Bob was promptly relegated to a back seat by Miss Harmsworth.

One day, Denton went rambling through the woods with the girl who cared. Neither of them felt as free in the other's presence as in the old times when sentiment had not been of the party. Phrases now were apt to take on subtle meanings, and silence was more full than speech. Presently they found themselves emerging from the woods to the golf links. They seated themselves on the very spot where Denton had first declared himself. Naturally both their minds reverted to this, and by a natural transition, Miss Tremont turned to the interloper in her Eden.

"I understand that Miss Harmsworth leaves for New York to-morrow," she ventured.

"Yes, she told me."

"A charming girl, don't you think?"

"Very. Young Waldo thinks so, too."

"Who is he?"

"A young New York lawyer she is practically engaged to. He came up day before yesterday."

"I saw her exhibiting him. Is your nose out of joint?" she asked him, demurely.

"Not a bit. You see I happen to be in love with another girl."

"Oh."

"Yes. I took the cure, and it didn't help a bit. I have done all I could about it. Seems to me you ought to exert yourself about it now."

"Why, what more can I do?"

"You might care, too," he suggested.

Miss Tremont blushed, and found no answer to that. But Denton seemed to think her silence encouraging.

MY LADY'S DRESSING TABLE

By Sadakichi Hartmann

TEN o'clock is striking. The room is still dark.

The sun is lost in the thick hangings at the windows, while a fairy lamp that is dying out—I hope my readers will excuse this stretch of imagination—struggles in vain against the darkness.

On a chair a gauze skirt has been left, farther on a satin slipper has been negligently cast. On the dressing table sparkle jewels on a silver tray, and a bouquet is fading beside a ball programme.

Suddenly a white form appears—with hair falling in disorder about the shoulders, with a throat lost in waves of lace—bending forward to catch a glimpse of a pair of night-worn eyes in the mirror.

My lady has again taken possession of her dressing table, from which she ventured forth last night to an evening of triumph and adoration, and to which she now returns to gird herself for new conquests.

Here among an array of boxes, large crystal bowls and bottles of all shapes, crowned with silver tops, among all these tools and instruments, whose dainty and mysterious uses contribute so largely to modern coquetry, she feels more at home than under the glittering chandeliers. Here she sits and muses for hours. Do we not all prefer, at times, our own reveries to other people's gossip?

Here she lingers over letters, of which each page is an homage to her beauty, each line devoted to those phrases that remain eternally young. Of late, it has become quite the fashion again to dream of princes; they are still as plentiful as

in the fairy-tales. Only the plot of the story has somewhat changed; it is no longer the prince who leads the fair maiden to his castle, but the lady who takes the poor prince to her father's mansion for a confidential talk.

At the dressing-table my lady really lives; here she is alone, and society with its pressing, never-ceasing duties has no immediate claim upon her.

Time is of no consequence, when it comes to the question of generally beautifying herself.

The blond or dark tresses, which were allowed to flow unconfined to the waist, are now rearranged to serve as a nimbus for the features, to give relief to whatever of firmness or sweetness the young face may possess. Then, behind, this charming aureole of curls, the love-locks of modern time, a labyrinth of graceful loopings and wavings, whereof—at least to the eyes of men—neither the beginning nor the ending can be discerned, is artfully built up. Only my lady herself knows the key to that riddle. And how the whole is held in place with curious transparent combs of tortoise shell and shot through with invisible hairpins is the greatest mystery of all.

Alas! it has all become a mystery. The camp of the modern Amazon is fortified against all inquisitive invasions.

Modern men generally become embodiments of prose, veritable mummies in regard to sentiment, before they are thirty, even in our Prince Hal days few of us ever played the part of Cherubino to a Countess Almaviva.

The times when ladies of position, like the Maintenons, Pompadours and Du Barrys at the Court of Versailles,

held their *petits levées* and *grands levées* in their boudoirs, and the dressing table rose to the dignity of a throne, from which the fair one dispensed her favors and smiled upon her favorite suitor, are long past. Our beaux have to be content with less graceful opportunities of paying those gallant compliments, which, though devoid of sense, say more than long speeches.

But we have, after all, made some progress toward rehabilitation. For was it not a principle of our former American creed to preach against what is called "fine clothes"? And of what use would a dressing table be when my lady has to affect all possible plainness and sanctity? In some circles a dressing table, if not regarded altogether as a snare of his Satanic Majesty, would certainly have been condemned as an evidence of idle vanity, to be shunned at all cost. As for the seductive and unfathomable aesthetics of the boudoir, American morals did not recognize their existence.

Now, thanks to the beauty of our women, who revolted against such tyranny, it has become an indispensable institution in every household. Even high life below stairs is no longer satisfied without manicuring sets. What the library and private bar are to man, the dressing table is to woman.

There she will sit and dig out her costume effects by dint of patience and hard work, and alter them again and again, until they suit her. She will discover her own color—perchance some shade like Empress Eugenie's *East de Nil*, that ingenuous mixture of gray and green and silver, sparkling like the waves of the Nile in a moonlit night, which will lend her personality an individual keynote of its own.

She is aware that she also has to be *bien coiffée* and *bien soignée* in every infinitesimal detail before she can hope to be *bien mise*, and be ranked among those well-dressed women, of whom a London tailor asked, why they should not be considered second to painters and sculptors, as they supply the originals which the artists only need to copy to be assured of fame.

Count Tolstoi informs us that men fall in love with bonnets and jackets. My lady would reply to the great Russian that men fall in love with the "cut." Cupid has never known the day when he was insensible to the bewitching influences of the tailor's handiwork. Love comes more quickly in response to the silent wooing of an irreproachable fit than to the arduous call of the poet's muse.

And it is gratifying to know that every woman can be well dressed, if she tries hard and long enough. Money is no guarantee. Artistic instinct is not an absolute necessity. To dress well, one must take infinite pains which, after all, amounts to genius.

The dressing table is a sort of higher education to every woman who wants to take a course in beauty culture. There are many lessons, too numerous to mention, that have to be learned before she can claim to be a graduate; but, after a while, they cease to be lessons, and turn into pleasures, and then my lady of fashion almost regrets that there are not fourteen classic styles of arranging the hair, such as are known to the women of Japan, at her disposal.

How is a woman to know when she has found her most tasteful attire? I believe my lady can trust her own eyes when she is left alone before her mirror.

The mirror is her most reliable and most exacting critic. It is even more indiscreet than her dearest lady friends, for true to its nature, it is absolutely truthful. It reflects things as they are, and if my lady will take the trouble of studying herself in one of those three-leaved mirrors, which show at once her face, her profile and her back, inclosing her in her own image, she may suffer, but will grow wise.

Insincere flatterers may still extol her eyes, and compare her to a thousand beautiful things—the stars and flowers, and I know not what else, but the mirror will tell her bluntly that her complexion is not quite as transparent as in former years, and that the first crowfeet begin to show around her eyes.

And it is well aware of its power. The advice it offers is always followed.

It enjoys the considerations of a whole lifetime. What a charming part, that of the dressing table!—containing a wealth of tender cares and gentle admonitions, in which the profane only see vanity, while the initiated recognize a faithful confidant of womanhood, the accountant of her beauty and the triumphs she excites.

And whenever I see an old Rococo dressing table with strange scrolls and volutes from which fat Cupids with pink cheeks and merry blue china eyes emerge, I wonder what beauty of another more indolent age sat before it and "bathed the sin of her beauty in its translucent depths." And I sometimes imagine I see a fair form, in powdered hair and black beauty patches, smile from its surface.

The dressing table apparently has always enjoyed the enviable reputation of being the confidant of woman's secrets, accompanying her through history like a guardian angel.

The first dressing table was a rather primitive arrangement. It consisted merely of a sheet of water, furnished by some woodland pool, in which nymphs and dryads reflected their vague whiteness. And there is but little doubt that the brooks of Eden served Eve both as mirror and bath, for even there woman must have been addicted to coquetry, although there was but one solitary man present to be subdued.

How many hours may not Penelope have spent before her marble dressing table, inlaid with a slab of sculptured ivory, continually consulting her metal mirror to assure herself that she was not getting too old—as Odysseus was really staying away an unusually long time.

What frightful outbursts of anger must the dressing table of Queen Elizabeth have reflected, when something went wrong in the affairs of state. It was fortunate that the dressing tables at that period were cumbersome, elaborately carved in solid oak, and that the old coquette herself was encased in enormous hoop farthingales, which made it difficult for her to reach even for her favorite Earl of Oxford perfume—as

otherwise the Venetian mirror, specially imported from the glass works of Murano, for the use of the virgin queen might have been shivered to atoms more than once.

Queen Henrietta, equally erratic but of a less violent temper, is said to have spent whole nights at her silver dressing table of Spanish make, busy not so much with powder puff and lotions as with the planning of some diplomatic intrigue, through which she could gain political power and influence over her husband, Charles I.

Yet all these historical personages had too many body servants and attendants to minister to their every want. They were really never alone, and their dressing tables did not receive their full measure of attention. We all know to what endless and at times rather unpleasant ceremonies poor Marie Antoinette had to submit herself, whenever she wished to make a change of costume.

The pleasure of dressing consists in attending to *les petits soins* oneself. The mysteries of the toilet, after all, should not be unveiled.

It would be nothing short of high treason to betray any of the secrets, any of the mysterious manipulations that take place at the dressing table. They have reached a rare state of perfection, and I believe it would be a fallacy to bestow the palm of superiority any longer upon the age of George IV. as the golden period of cosmetics. True enough, our playwrights do not continually allude to oils, tinctures, quintessences, pomatums, perfumes, paint white and red like the dramatists of the Restoration, but that is largely a fault of their method of writing. They obstinately insist on studying foreign plays rather than making observations of their own time and people.

Cosmetics have always furnished an endless topic for the moralists. But since the evolutions of the human race have proved cosmetics to be as necessary as our daily bread, why waste any more words about it? We should feel grateful that ornaments for the nose, such as the Peruvian women wear, are still

found absolutely unnecessary, and that my lady prefers the color of her natural teeth to the gilded or blackened incisors of Japanese maidens.

Hamlet said to Ophelia: "God has given you one face, and you paint yourself another," which shows that even a demure damozel like Polonius' daughter might have bathed in milk to preserve the softness and sleekness of her skin.

If only all women were artists in that respect, men would be much happier. We would have always something pretty to look at. It should impress us therefore as very considerate on the part of certain women if they paint their faces, and it is of little consequence

whether it is "an inch thick" as in Shakespeare's time, or applied with more moderation, as is the custom today.

Fashions come and go, one thing only is sure—the dressing table will always remain an altar of devotion of a never-dying creed, of which the lady of fashion is herself the idol.

Even when old age comes, the dressing table is not forsaken. The mirror may have become dull and blurred. His mistress has become aged as well, she only seems to like it the more. She still sits there for hours, and grows intoxicated with reminiscences of the past, and their distant perfume of youth.



AT ARMS WITH MORPHEUS

By S. H. Peters

I NEVER could quite understand how Tom Hopkins came to make that blunder, for he had been through a whole term at a medical college—before he inherited his aunt's fortune—and had been considered strong in therapeutics.

We had been making a call together that evening, and afterward Tom ran up to my rooms for a pipe and a chat before going on to his own luxurious apartments. I had stepped into the other room for a moment when I heard Tom sing out:

"Oh, Billy, I'm going to take about four grains of quinine, if you don't mind—I'm feeling all blue and shivery. Guess I'm taking cold."

"All right," I called back. "The bottle is on the second shelf. Take it in a spoonful of that elixir of eucalyptus. It knocks the bitter out."

After I came back we sat by the fire and got our briars going. In about

eight minutes Tom sank back into a gentle collapse.

I went straight to the medicine cabinet and looked.

"You unmitigated hayseed!" I growled. "See what money will do for a man's brains!"

There stood the morphine bottle with the stopple out just as Tom had left it.

I routed out another young M. D. who roomed on the floor above, and sent him for old Dr. Gales, two squares away. Tom Hopkins has too much money to be attended by rising young practitioners alone.

When Gales came we put Tom through as expensive a course of treatment as the resources of the profession permit. After the more drastic remedies we gave him citrate of caffeine in frequent doses and strong coffee, and walked him up and down the floor between two of us. Old Gales pinched

him and slapped his face and worked hard for the big check he could see in the distance. The young M. D. from the next floor gave Tom a most hearty, rousing kick, and then apologized to me.

"Couldn't help it," he said. "I never kicked a millionaire before in my life. I may never have another opportunity."

"Now," said Dr. Gales, after a couple of hours, "he'll do. But keep him awake for another hour. You can do that by talking to him and shaking him up occasionally. When his pulse and respiration are normal then let him sleep. I'll leave him with you now."

I was left alone with Tom, whom we had laid on a couch. He lay very still, and his eyes were half closed. I began my work of keeping him awake.

"Well, old man," I said, "you've had a narrow squeak, but we've pulled you through. When you were attending lectures, Tom, didn't any of the professors ever casually remark that m-o-r-p-h-i-a never spells 'quinia,' especially in four-grain doses? But I won't pile it up on you until you get on your feet. But you ought to have been a druggist, Tom, you're splendidly qualified to fill prescriptions."

Tom looked at me with a faint and foolish smile.

"B'ly," he murmured, "I feel jus' like a hum'n bird flyin' around a jolly lot of most 'shpensive roses. Don' bozzer me. Goin' sleep now."

And he went to sleep in two seconds. I shook him by the shoulder.

"Now, Tom," I said, severely, "this won't do. The big doctor said you must stay awake for at least an hour. Open your eyes. You're not entirely safe yet, you know. Wake up."

Tom Hopkins weighs one hundred and ninety-eight. He gave me another somnolent grin, and fell into deeper slumber. I would have made him move about, but I might as well have tried to make Cleopatra's needle waltz around the room with me. Tom's breathing became stertorous, and that, in connection with morphia poisoning, means danger.

Then I began to think. I could not

rouse his body; I must strive to excite his mind. "Make him angry," was an idea that suggested itself. "Good!" I thought; "but how?" There was not a joint in Tom's armor. Dear old fellow! He was good nature itself, and a gallant gentleman, fine and true and clean as sunlight. He came from somewhere down South, where they still have ideals and a code. New York had charmed, but had not spoiled him. He had that old-fashioned, chivalrous reverence for women, that—Eureka!—there was my idea! I worked the thing up for a minute or two in my imagination. I chuckled to myself at the thought of springing a thing like that on old Tom Hopkins. Then I took him by the shoulder and shook him till his ears flopped. He opened his eyes lazily. I assumed an expression of scorn and contempt, and pointed my finger within two inches of his nose.

"Listen to me, Hopkins," I said, in cutting and distinct tones, "you and I have been good friends, but I want you to understand that in the future my doors are closed against any man who acts as much like a scoundrel as you have."

Tom looked the least bit interested.

"What's the matter, Billy?" he muttered, composedly, "don't your clothes fit you?"

"If I were in your place," I went on, "which, thank God, I am not, I think I would be afraid to close my eyes. How about that girl you left waiting for you down among those lonesome Southern pines—the girl that you've forgotten since you came into your confounded money? Oh, I know what I'm talking about. While you were a poor medical student she was good enough for you. But now, since you are a millionaire, it's different. I wonder what she thinks of the performances of that peculiar class of people which she has been taught to worship—the Southern gentlemen? I'm sorry, Hopkins, that I was forced to speak about these matters, but you've covered it up so well and played your part so nicely that I would have sworn you were above such unmanly tricks."

Poor Tom. I could scarcely keep

from laughing outright to see him struggling against the effects of the opiate. He was distinctly angry, and I didn't blame him. Tom had a Southern temper. His eyes were open now, and they showed a gleam or two of fire. But the drug still clouded his mind and bound his tongue.

"C-c-confound you," he stammered, "I'll s-smash you."

He tried to rise from the couch. With all his size he was very weak now. I thrust him back with one arm. He lay there glaring like a lion in a trap.

"That will hold you for a while, you old looney," I said to myself. I got up and lit my pipe, for I was needing a smoke. I walked around a bit, congratulating myself on my brilliant idea.

I heard a snore. I looked around. Tom was asleep again. I walked over and punched him on the jaw. He looked at me as pleasant and ungrudging as an idiot. I chewed my pipe and gave it to him hard.

"I want you to recover yourself and get out of my rooms as soon as you can," I said, insultingly. "I've told you what I think of you. If you have any honor or honesty left you will think twice before you attempt again to associate with gentlemen. She's a poor girl, isn't she?" I sneered. "Somewhat too plain and unfashionable for us since we got our money. Be ashamed to walk on Fifth Avenue with her, wouldn't you? Hopkins, you're forty-seven times worse than a cad. Who cares for your money? I don't. I'll bet that girl don't. Perhaps if you didn't have it you'd be more of a man. As it is you've made a cur of yourself, and"—I thought that quite dramatic—"perhaps broken a faithful heart." (Old Tom Hopkins breaking a faithful heart!) "Let me be rid of you as soon as possible."

I turned my back on Tom, and

winked at myself in a mirror. I heard him moving, and I turned again quickly. I didn't want a hundred and ninety-eight pounds falling on me from the rear. But Tom had only turned partly over, and laid one arm across his face. He spoke a few words rather more distinctly than before.

"I couldn't have—talked this way—to you, Billy, even if I'd heard people—lyin' 'bout you. But jus' soon's I can s—stand up—I'll break your neck—don' f'get it."

I did feel a little ashamed then. But it was to save Tom. In the morning, when I explained it, we would have a good laugh over it together.

In about twenty minutes Tom dropped into a sound, easy slumber. I felt his pulse, listened to his respiration, and let him sleep. Everything was normal, and Tom was safe. I went into the other room and tumbled into bed.

I found Tom up and dressed when I awoke the next morning. He was entirely himself again with the exception of shaky nerves and a tongue like a white-oak chip.

"What an idiot I was," he said, thoughtfully. "I remember thinking that quinine bottle looked queer while I was taking the dose. Have much trouble in bringing me 'round?"

I told him no. His memory seemed bad about the entire affair. I concluded that he had no recollection of my efforts to keep him awake, and decided not to enlighten him. Some other time, I thought, when he was feeling better, we would have some fun over it.

When Tom was ready to go he stopped, with the door open, and shook my hand.

"Much obliged, old fellow," he said, quietly, "for taking so much trouble with me—and for what you said. I'm going down now to telegraph to the little girl."



THE HELIX

By Morgan Robertson

Author of "Sinful Peck," "Spun Yarn," Etc.

"WE can get up a jury mainmast easy enough," said Captain Swarth, as he glanced around at his shattered deck; "but how'll we keep it up? Both main channels shot away, and not a ringbolt, cleat, bitt or cavit left abaft the main mast. What d'ye make of it, Yank?"

Yank Tate, the carpenter, an expert in makeshifts, and the most valuable man in that pirate crew, answered, slowly:

"I've been thinkin', capt'n—thinkin' hard. If I had tools I could work, for we have the material; but a big round shot's gone clean through my tool chest, and I can't find anything but the broad-ax and the saw. We'll have to stay the mainmast aft by a cat-stay, and forward by two to the 'midship moorin' bitts; then rig a leg-o'-mutton on the main, for we can't sling a gaff."

"But what'll we set up the cat-stay to?" asked Angel Todd, the mate, his long and solemn face more solemn than usual at the problem. "There's nothing intact but the wheel and binnacle, and they won't stand the strain."

"Pass a rope around under the stern," answered Yank, "long enough to clear the wheel and binnacle and set it up to that."

"Right," said the captain. "Yank, you're a genius. Get to work, Angel."

"How'll we splice wire rope?" asked the mate. "She's wire-rigged everywhere. I never spliced it—never saw it before."

"Nor I," said Swarth, "nor heard of it; but it *can* be spliced; it's got to be."

They were taking stock after the running fight. Five miles to the north,

rolling heavily in the trough with all canvas furled, lay the English war brig that had chased them. It had been a stern chase and a long one, dead before the wind, during which Swarth, unwilling to luff and lose headway, had held his fire but for an occasional shot from a small stern gun, and had watched his craft being slowly disintegrated by the well-aimed fire of the Englishman. The after part had suffered most; the taffrail and the quarter rails to nearly amidships were ripped and shattered, while the cabin resembled nothing so much as a pile of kindling wood; the main channels were gone, and with no support from the rigging a solid shot imbedded in the mainmast just above the deck had been enough to send it crashing down forward, springing the fore lower and topsail yards as it met them, and breaking squarely in two just below the crosstrees as it struck the rail. Then, when the submerging canvas pulled the two fragments overboard, Swarth might have given up. But the pursuing war craft did not bear away after firing this shot; on the contrary, she luffed still farther, and as she rolled in the trough of the sea her shaking canvas began to come in, while smoke arose from amidships. So, surmising that she was suffering from internal disorder, he went on, dragging the fallen spars in his wake.

She was a brigantine, acquired by Swarth in the usual manner, and as Angel had said, wire-rigged everywhere—one of the experiments that ship-builders are ever ready to turn out with each new invention. Not only were shrouds, stays and backstays of this

newly devised wire rope, but also the running gear—halyards, braces, lifts, sheets and tacks—in all its turnings and doublings down to the last part for hauling and belaying, was of the refractory material; and not only was it wire rope, but steel wire rope that, when slackened, curled into the spiral of the original coil. In all her maze of cordage there was not a piece of hemp or manila larger than a halter, nor longer than twenty-five fathoms—about the length of the fore brace.

Splicing wire—like chemistry and *materia medica*—is an experimental science. As Swarth had declared, it *can* be done by men who have spliced soft rope; but not at the first attempt. Those very able able-seamen of that crew got the heavy wreck of the mainmast aboard with but little trouble, trimmed it, and disconnected the topmast. They sent down the fore royal yard, sawed it lengthwise into battens to mend the damaged lower and topsail yards, and used up most of the soft royal running gear in the lashing thereof. With the lighter maintopmast for a derrick, they up-ended the shortened mainmast, and lashed the new heel to the stump with more of the hemp and manila; then, with the urgent necessity of properly securing this jury mainmast, they found themselves confronted with the problem of wire-splicing.

They avoided it in setting up the two main stays. Seamanship, which to a seaman is the will of Providence, decrees that masts shall first be secured from forward; and they found that two still intact and opposing legs of the main rigging would just reach from the masthead to the mooring bits amidships, and these they tautened in the ordinary way with lanyards through the dead-eyes; but the rest of the main rigging was broken or stranded, too short to reach anywhere, and to steady the mast from aft they had only the maintopmast backstays, the fore royal backstays and the fore royal stay—five long pieces of steel wire rope about the size of clothesline, equal in tensile strength to six-inch hemp or manila, but, in the judgment of these old school seamen,

very weak to hold the strain of a heavy lower mast. They would need to double it, many times.

So they would first splice a collar, or loop, in one end to slip over the masthead and rest on the cleat that Yank Tate had placed there for the purpose; and they tried it, one man after another. It looked simple—just the tucking of six ends under six strands, and tucking again, and once more. But, oh—the bloodshed and suffering, the groans and maledictions attending that job! Men who, a few hours before, had calmly faced gun fire, who had seen some of their number shattered and dismembered by solid shot, who were accustomed to hand-to-hand combats with knife or cutlass, winced and complained as the refractory ends of steel sliced their hands and wrists.

But at last the splice was done—looking much like a bundle of fagots—and the collar sent aloft to slip over the masthead. But now, in view of the plenitude of wire rope and its uncompromising stiffness, Swarth decided, first, that it would only be practicable to set up the kinky cat-stay through pulley blocks, one for each doubling; next, that with the small number of strong blocks still serviceable—the upper peak and throat halyard blocks, six sheaves in all—it would be advisable to conserve these up aloft and pass the lower turns around under the stern. This obviated the long rope suggested by Yank, but involved the splicing, end to end, of all the rope, with *long* splices.

Painfully the blood-weary cutthroats went at it, and it required the moral suasion of Swarth, Angel and Yank, each equipped with an iron belaying pin, to keep them at it. And when it is known that a long splice in a wire rope represents the acme of modern seamanship, it can be imagined what a task it was for these sore-fingered tyros to join the five pieces into one long rope with junc-tures small enough to travel through the blocks. Long before it was done Yank Tate had slung these blocks to the masthead just below the collar, and, by means of a staging rigged under the stern, nailed a succession of cleats to

the counter to keep each turn of the rope in place, clear of its neighbors. It was a wet job for Yank, as the craft was still charging along through a lumpy sea, and every now and then he went under as the stern sank. But not being troubled with the sores and sorrows of the others, he did not repine—even remaining to grease the cleats and planking.

Nor did he repine when at midday of the third day of work, the wind having died away coincident with the finishing of the splices, the craft rolled both rails under, and made his place on the staggering a place of danger. His task now was to straighten out those kinky coils of steel wire and lay each turn in its bed between the cleats as those on deck passed it around; but Yank had the born mechanic's love of a good job.

The final setting-up of that cat-stay was easy; a tackle clapped on to each part, as it led downward from its block above, tautened it, and a spun yarn racking held it while they shifted the tackle to the next part. A fathom or two of end remained when the job was done, and this, after nailing the part to the side, they allowed to trail overboard, as Yank emphatically and consistently had refused to cut steel wire with his broad ax. There was a curious resemblance to shrouds without ratlines in the six parts of wire rope leading up from each side; and this, in fact, was just about what they were.

A little sail-making reduced the torn mainsail to a three-cornered "mutton-leg," and this they hoisted at once. Swarth would now have gone farther, and sent up the topmast, to which they could have set a jib, upside down; but the inflamed condition of his men's hands made such a step unwise at present; their hands hurt them more than did the impact on their heads of belaying pins, and under stress their line of least resistance would be mutiny. So he waited, while the hot afternoon wore on, and whistled for a wind to blow them on their way—due south to their island retreat, where they could properly refit and recuperate.

They had dropped the smoking Eng-

lish war brig below the horizon late in the first day of flight; and now calculated that unless she had conquered the fire and resumed the chase, there were fully one hundred and fifty miles between them when the wind had failed.

The brigantine, with canvas flapping as she rolled, swung slowly around the compass, heading any way that she was thrown by the varying heave of an ugly cross sea, the dominant motion of which seemed to be, not from the direction the wind had last come from, but out of the west. And a filmy mist arising on the western horizon at about four o'clock indicated to Swarth that wind would follow the sea from here.

He ceased his whistling, ordered the foretopgallant sail and flying jib taken in, and the men obeyed him painfully, grumbling over their sores and making hard work of an easy job. There must have been some kind of poison from the wire, for their hands were swelling.

The filmy mist spread rapidly toward them, blotting out the western sun, and eventually the eastern sky. Yet it presented a curious seeming of transparency—the horizon on all sides was distinct, and the sky above still looked blue. But it was an unnatural blue, and there was a closeness to the air that made breathing difficult.

The men lounged and shuffled nervously about the deck, Angel and Yank conversed in low tones near the poop steps, and the captain often consulted a new-fangled instrument called a barometer which, though it showed a very low reading, gave him little light.

It suddenly grew darker. Overhead the blue had become gray, and a condensation of the filmy mist was forming a cloud. It became smaller and blacker, with tints of purple in the creases, and a glistening rim on its western edge. It hovered directly over the rolling craft and descended until it seemed that the fore royal pole had punctured it. Here it remained, and a puff of hot wind filled the sails, then died away.

"How are you heading now?" asked Swarth, quietly, to the helmsman.

"South an' by east, sir," answered the man.

"Bring her due south when the wind comes. It's our course, but the Lord knows where it'll hit us from. Angel," he called, "haul down the jib and clew up the foresail."

As he spoke a white light blinded them, and a deafening report shook the whole fabric of hull, spar and cordage. For a time not a man aboard could see or hear, though they could feel a warm deluge of rain and a furious blast of wind which seemingly came from all directions. Angel Todd groped his way to the jib and foretopgallant halyards, casting them off; then he called to the men to man clewlines and down haul, and a few, who heard faintly before their sight returned, responded in the darkness. But they knew by the feel of the ropes they pulled that the jib was in ribbons and the topgallantsail aback. Then, as the darkness and dullness cleared from eyes and ears they saw that the craft had sternway and heard their captain's thundering roar coming to them against the wind:

"Lay aft here two hands to the wheel. Swanson's struck dead."

Two came, and found Swarth at the wheel, with a prostrate figure at his feet. There was a curious, pungent odor in the air, which lasted but a moment, then was blown away. The lightning had dodged the taller foremast, and sought the best conductor—the wire that led overboard.

"Wheel's hard-a-port," said Swarth, releasing it to them. "Due south when the canvas fills. This wind's out o' the north, and it's dead fair again." Then he called forward to furl the topgallantsail, but to leave the foresail as it was.

Slowly the craft backed around, and, as the forward canvas flapped and filled, forged ahead and settled down to the course Swarth had given. The squall was pressing the seas to a flat surface of suds, but it was much lighter now, as though the lightning stroke had cleared the air; yet the sun was still hidden.

The jury mainmast had stood the pressure well, but as the mutton-leg made steering before that furious wind too difficult for safety, Swarth took it in

—an awful job for those lacerated and puffed up hands—and the craft sped on under her foresail, topsail and foretopmast staysail. Then they lifted the dead man forward, but had not got him off the shattered poop before he wriggled and spoke, and they laid him down and questioned him. He knew nothing of the lightning stroke, he said, but complained of a prickly sensation all through him. Soon he could walk, and later on, work.

The squall steadied to a gray gale, and mountain seas pursued the crippled vessel; but she rode them well, her only danger being the risk of broaching to from the almost helpless condition of the helmsmen; but, as night came down, Yank and Angel stationed themselves, ready to help should their hands give out, and thus equipped they steered on through the darkness by the compass alone, there being neither star nor cloud to range by. With a sore-handed man to hold the reel, Swarth hove and hauled in the log every two hours until daylight. Ten knots even, she had made, he said, all through the night, and before that good fair gale died out they would be many hundred miles away from their enemy, even should she still be afloat.

The two men who came to the wheel at six that morning made such bad work of it that Swarth profanely rebuked them and called for two others; but there was no improvement in the steering, and he examined the hands of his crew. They were swollen out of all proportion, painful to the extreme, and they were unable to close the fingers around spokes or ropes. So he placed Angel and Yank at the wheel and sent them forward with poultices. In half an hour they all looked as though they had donned boxing gloves, and, as though conscious of their utter uselessness at working ship, essayed the next best thing—they climbed to the forecastle deck to keep lookout. Soon one of them called out:

"Sail ho," and Swarth, looking where he pointed, observed a craft hove to on the starboard bow, not a mile away, and heading across their course.

Swarth reached for his glasses, but as he brought them to bear another shout came from forward, followed by cries of amazement, and he looked where they now pointed. There on the starboard beam, just above the horizon, glowing faintly through the stormcloud, was the sun—*rising in the west*.

There was no mistaking it for the moon, even though the moon had been full at the time and could rise at seven in the morning; nothing but the sun could penetrate that thick sky. Swarth involuntarily looked at the compass, but it told him nothing; the brigantine was heading south.

The men came running aft, and tremulously asked questions, which neither Swarth, Angel nor Yank could answer. While they watched the luminary it rose higher—unmistakably so. It was the sun, rising in the west; but why?

What human mind can remain tranquil before such a violation of the laws of Nature? Wonder and perplexity grew to terror; they clutched each other, and crouched down, with elbows raised, as though to ward off a blow. Swarth, pale and silent, stared at the rising orb; Yank Tate's face was a picture of childish fright as he helped Angel steer; Angel, doughty ex-missionary, steered a seamanly course, but cast the burden upon the Lord. With his eyes on the compass, his lips moved in prayer.

A hail came from over to starboard: “Shorten down and round to, or I'll sink you.”

Not two lengths away was a black brig squaring away to a parallel course. She was under whole topsails, but the foretopgallant sail was going up, and her port battery was manned—the crews in position and the black muzzles protruding from the opened ports. There was no escape. They had left that brig three hundred miles to the north. How could she have pursued them, missed them, and waited for them here? It meant a detour and twenty knots of speed, which is beyond the power of sailing craft. It was a mystery equal to that of the western sun.

“I've got you under my guns, Swarth,” roared an officer through a

trumpet. “Heave to or I'll give you a broadside.”

“My men are all crippled,” answered the pale but self-contained Swarth, “and we cannot handle sail. If I round to the spars will go.”

“Round to and let them go.”

“Down with the wheel, Angel,” said Swarth. “The game's up.”

Swarth was but partly right. The craft rolled her foretopmast out in three rolls; but the well-stayed jury mast remained in place.

Three hours later, moored to stanchions in the man-of-war's 'tween-deck by leg-irons, Swarth and his crew received a visit from the captain. He was a blunt and candid soul, and greeted Swarth pleasantly.

“I've called you all kinds of a d—d scoundrel, Swarth,” he said, “since I've hunted you; but I never called you a d—d fool. What did you come back for? Did you think I couldn't put out the fire in the galley and mend my steering gear?”

“Come back?” queried the pirate. “I don't know—how did you get ahead of us?”

“I didn't,” chuckled the captain. “If you'd only known you could have sunk me. I'm bound to port now to get more powder, and get you hanged. The fire threatened the magazine and we doused it. By the way, your wheel and binnacle are just what I need to replace mine, that you knocked endways with the same shot that hit the galley stove. So I took them out before scuttling your old tub. But where did you get that compass? The needle points south.”

“It does?” queried Swarth. “It never did with me—wait, yes, by Gawd. We steered due south, and fetched back here. That's why the sun rose in the west. But what—why, the lightning! It must have changed it—somehow!”

“Somehow, yes,” repeated the captain, with a grin. “We figured it out before we scuttled her. That was a fine jury main rigging you put up—a coil of wire insulated by wood around a magnet, with one end up above the coils and the other over the side. A little science is a dangerous thing, Swarth.”

A VERY GOOD THING FOR THE GIRL

By Leonard Merrick

BAGOT told us this tale in the Stage Door Club one night. We were sitting around the fire, talking of perfect love, and somebody asked him if he had ever thought of marrying.

"Once," said the comedian, cheerfully.

"Couldn't you afford it?" His talent and the remains of his good looks were worth fifty pounds a week to him then, but there had been days—well, listen to Bagot!

"It wasn't that I couldn't afford it," he said, with a laugh; "actors never wait till they can afford it. I escaped in a curious way. What saved me was being such an artist. Fact! I was really smitten. If I hadn't been an artist in spite of myself I should be shivering in the last train home to the suburbs now, instead of talking to you dear boys in an armchair, with a glass at my side. What? Oh, I'll tell you about it with pleasure.

"Of course, you know I made my name as the *Rev. Simon Tibbits*, in poor Pulteney's 'Touch and Go.' Some things a man doesn't forget, and I remember how I felt when I settled for the part better than I remember yesterday. You see it was my first London engagement, and I had been trying to get one in London for sixteen years. Sixteen years I had been 'on the road,' and seen the amateurs with money sauntering on to the West End stage from their 'Varsity club!'

"My agent had told me to try my luck at the office over the theatre one morning in July, and when I went in

there was nobody there but a young man who I guessed must be Pulteney. He was sitting at the table with a pencil in his hand, fiddling with a cardboard model of one of the scenes, and looking as worried as if he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"Have I the honor of speaking to Mr. Pulteney?" said I. In those days I imagined authors were important persons.

"He flushed, and smiled—rather on the wrong side of his mouth, I thought: 'That's my name.'

"I was sent around to see you about the part of the clergyman in your farcical comedy, Mr. Pulteney," I said. I had really been sent to see the stage-manager, but soft soap is never wasted, and I was always a bit of a diplomatist.

"He asked me to sit down, and we talked. He was smoking a cigarette, and I thought for a moment he was going to offer me one. I suppose it occurred to him that it wouldn't be the right thing to ask an actor to smoke in the manager's room, for he threw his own cigarette away. He was a gentleman, poor Pulteney, though he was a deuced bad dramatist.

"The manager came bustling back soon, and began to hum and haw, but Pulteney put in a word that made it all right. I was told it was a capital part, and a big chance for me, and I skipped downstairs, and out into the street, feeling as puffed up as if I owned the Strand. As a matter of fact, the salary wasn't much—I had had better money in the provinces—but the

thought of making a hit in the West End so excited me that I was nearly popping with pride.

"Great Cumberland Place! wasn't I sold when the part came. You've no idea how duffing it really was. I don't mind saying that a good many jolly fine comedians would never have got a laugh in it. When I read the jokes I could have cried. It wasn't funny as the author wrote it, dear boys, believe me. I don't want to brag of what I've done—I'm not a man who 'gases' about himself—but it was the 'character' *I put into it* that made that part!

"Well, the rehearsals weren't beginning for three weeks, and I kept hoping I'd see how to do something with it before the first 'call.' I spoke the lines one way, and I spoke the lines another way, and the more I studied, the glummer I felt. I had my dinner at Exeter Hall several times, and listened to the people giving their orders; it was cheap, and I thought I might hear the sort of tone I was trying to get hold of. But I didn't. On the Sunday I went to three churches, and sat through three sermons. Honest Injun! And that was no use. Talk about an R. A.'s difficulty in finding the right model! I spent eight dusty days scouring London for a model for the Rev. Simon Tibbits!

"Then one afternoon I had come out of 'Prosser's Avenue.' As it happened, I wasn't thinking 'shop'; I wasn't thinking about anything in particular; and all of a sudden I heard a voice. A voice? I heard the voice. I heard the voice I needed for the part!

"I jumped. My heart was in my throat. There, smiling up at a six-foot constable, was a little parson asking the way to Baker Street. He looked like an elderly cherub, with his pink cheeks, and his innocent, inquiring eyes. I held my breath in the hope he would go on talking, but the policeman had answered him, and he tripped along with merely a 'Thank you.' He tripped along with the oddest walk I have ever seen, and I dodged after him, never taking my gaze off his legs, and studying them all the way to Charing Cross.

"As I expected, he was going by bus. There was one just moving. Up went his umbrella, and the next moment I was on the step, too, intending to lure him into conversation as soon as I could, and master his voice as nicely as I was mastering his legs.

"'Full inside,' said the conductor, putting his dirty hand before my face. I was so annoyed I could have punched his head.

"Well, there was nothing for it but to go on top, and wait for some one to get out. Hang it, nobody did get out, and I saw no more of my little model till we reached Baker Street. I meant to let him walk a few yards, and then ask him to direct me to Lord's, but there was a surprise for me; he tripped across the road into the station. 'Oho!' I said to myself, 'training it. So much the better. We're going to have a comfortable chat together, after all, you and I!'

"I kept as close to him when he took his ticket as if I'd had designs on his watch, and I heard him say: 'Third-class to Rickmansworth, if you please.' This was rather awkward—I didn't want to pay a long fare, and I didn't know the line well; I had to book as far as Rickmansworth, too. When we got around to the platform the train was there, and he hovered up and down for five minutes or more, looking for a seat to suit him. I began to think we'd both be left behind. Then, just as they were slamming the doors, he made up his mind. In he went, and I after him, and—what do you think? We were both on the same side of the compartment, with a fat woman and a soldier between us!

"Two passengers between us, I give you my word, and no room opposite. Not only I couldn't talk to him—I couldn't even see him. Every time we drew into a station I prayed the compartment would thin a bit; I sat tense, watching the faces. Not a sign on them! You've heard of the American who got so exasperated standing up in a crowded car, that at last he shouted: 'Say! ain't none o' you people got homes?' That was how I felt."

Bagot's imitation of the American was very good, and we signified our appreciation in the usual way. When the laugh was over, some one told the waiter we were thirsty, and the storyteller filled his pipe.

"Well," he resumed, puffing, "to cut a long journey short, we reached Rickmansworth without my having had a glimpse of my gentleman. I was about desperate now. He hadn't taken a dozen steps when I overtook him, and asked if he would be kind enough to inform me whether any decent apartments were to be had in the village. It didn't seem worth while to have had all this bother just to hear him speak again for ten seconds, and I was wishing myself back in my apartments in Kennington; I said the first thing that came into my head.

"It turned out to be the best question I could have put.

"I am a visitor myself," he said, beaming at me, "but I believe there are rooms to be had in Cornstalk Terrace. Yes, I am almost positive I noticed a card in a window as I passed through this morning."

"I stood simply lapping his voice up.

"Is it difficult for a stranger to find?" I asked.

"No, indeed," he said, "it is quite near. But I am going there if you care to accompany me——"

"Oh, you're too good!" I exclaimed, and upon my word I could have hugged him.

"The road was a great deal nearer than I wanted it to be, for he was chirruping to me beautifully, and I hated to part from him. When we arrived I effervesced with gratitude, and he hoped I'd find comfortable quarters; and then I went straight back to the station—and heard I had about three hours to wait for a train! Pleasant? Rickmansworth isn't the sprightliest place I've ever spent three hours in, either. I had some nourishment in the bar of the hotel across the way, and I examined the High Street. It wasn't extensive. The barmaid had told me there was a park, so I started to discover it. I wasn't keen on the park,

you understand, but I thought it would be a nice quiet stop to rehearse in and see if I had caught the little cleric's voice. As I was going along, past a row of villas, blest if I didn't come across him again, standing at his gate.

"He supposed I had been hunting for lodgings all the time, so, of course, I had to keep the game up. He was a friendly old chap, and, honor bright, I felt sorry to think I was going to turn him into ridicule on the stage. Still, he would never know, and actors can't be choosers. He went inside to ask his landlady if she could recommend any diggings to me, and a minute afterward he fluttered out to say he had quite forgotten there would be a couple of rooms vacant in that very house next day. Scot! I had had no more idea of taking rooms than I had of taking the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, but it was too gigantic a chance to miss. I fixed the matter with the old woman there and then, and the next morning my model and I were living under the same roof! . . . Pass the matches, one of you fellows; my pipe is out. . . .

"At the back of the house there were some lettuces and a clothes-prop that were called a 'garden.' My parlor was at the back, too; and after dinner I saw the rector airing himself. By now I had learned he was a rector. I lost no time in joining him, you may be sure—I wasn't paying two rents to go to sleep on the sofa—and we discussed politics and public libraries. It was a bit heavy for me, but I didn't worry much what he talked about, so long as I could hear his dulcet tones. I ought to have said there was a bench against the clothes-prop; so far as her means permitted, the old woman did things handsomely.

"There was a bench, and we sat down on it; and while we were sitting there the door opened—and out into the sunshine there came a young and beautiful girl. She wore a white cotton frock, and there was no paint or powder on her face, and she had the kind of eyes that make you want to say your prayers and be good. I'm not going to gush—I'm holding myself in—but, on my honor,

she was just the saintliest picture of English maidenhood ever seen in a poet's dream.

"My daughter," said my model.

"I was so staggered that I bowed like a super at a bob a night.

"Yes, the old woman did things handsomely—there was room for three on the bench. She sat by me, turning a back yard into paradise—I mean the girl, not the old woman—and I forgot to study her father for half an hour. I heard where his living was, and why they were taking a holiday, and I stammered that I was an actor, and was afraid they'd be shocked. I was stupid to own it, though it was all right, and they didn't mind; but there was something in that girl's eyes that forced the truth from you in spite of yourself. I had been going to say I was in the city, but the lie stuck.

"There's some fine country around Rickmansworth—'Ricky,' the natives call it—and we used to explore, the three of us. We'd go to Chorley Wood, and to Chenies—what a good 'back cloth' Chenies would make! By the end of the week we were together nearly all the day. They invited me into their room to supper, and after supper Marion would sing at a decrepit piano. The meals were quite plain, you know—sometimes we'd pick the green stuff in the garden ourselves—but, boys, the peace of that little village room in the lamplight! The minister and his child—the simple, God-fearing man, and that girl with her deep, grave eyes and earnest voice. Their devotion to each other, the homeliness of it all! To me, a touring player, it was sweet, it was wonderful, to be welcomed in an atmosphere of home.

"If the comedy had been put into rehearsal on the date arranged, it would have been better for me. But it wasn't—the rehearsals were postponed—and soon I was thinking much more of Marion than of my part. I used to talk to her of—well, of things I had never talked of to any one except my mother when I was a kid. Somehow I didn't feel ashamed to talk of them to that girl. She took me out of myself. She

raised me up. The footlights were forgotten.

"Oh, I had no right to think of her in the way I did, of course! What could I hope for? There was a world between us, and I saw it. I told myself I had done all I came to do, and that I ought to go back to town at once; I told myself I was mad to stay there. But I knew I loved her. I loved her as I have never loved a woman since—and there were moments when I thought that *she* was fond of *me*."

Bagot, it was rapidly becoming evident to us, had forgotten that he prefaced the story by congratulating himself on not having married the girl. His voice trembled. We saw that, carried away by his own intensity as a narrator, he was beginning to believe he was a blighted being. But we looked sympathetic, and let him "work it up."

"One day she owned she cared for me," he continued, with a far-away air. "It was the day before they were going home, and we were talking of our 'friendship.' Somehow I—I lost my head, and she was crying in my arms.

"I asked her to marry me. I swore she would never repent it. She sat listening to me with her hands limp in her lap, and a look on her face that I shall see till I die. She was afraid—not of me, but that her father wouldn't consent. They had no violent prejudice against the theatre, but she had never been to one in her life; for her to marry an actor seemed an impossible thing.

"I went to him right off. I told him I worshiped her; I implored him to trust her to me. It was an awful shock to him; I don't believe he had a suspicion of the state of affairs—he reproached himself for letting it come about. But he was very gentle. He said he had hoped for a far different future for her, still that all he wanted was for his child to be happy; he said he couldn't stand in her way if he knew she was really sure of herself. In the end he promised she should marry me if she wanted to in three years' time.

"When I parted from her we con-

sidered we were engaged; and in the evening, after they left, I went to town.

"I went to town, and there was a 'call' for the first rehearsal of 'Touch and Go.' I had forgotten business, I had forgotten everything but Marion. That 'call' paralyzed me. I saw what I had done—I realized the situation. The girl I was to marry revered her father, and I meant to burlesque him on the stage!

"I couldn't do it, I wouldn't! How could I think of it now? It wasn't that I feared their finding it out—as I tell you, they weren't playgoers, and their home was a good way off besides—it was the heartlessness of the thing that frightened me. To 'make myself up' as *her* father? To speak the bland, hypocritical lines of the part in her father's voice, to imitate and turn him into ridicule to amuse a crowd. I say, how could I do it?"

"All the same it was precious difficult to avoid, for I had studied him so long. But I went to the show the first day and rehearsed as I had expected to rehearse before I met him. Perhaps not so well, it was a strain *not* to be like him after all my study, and it made me tame and stiff. I rehearsed so the first day, and for three or four days, and presently I began to notice that the management was a bit unhappy, and that Pulteney nearly twisted his mustache out during my scenes. If an author has written a bad part, trust him to blame the actor! He buttonholed me at last, and begged me 'to put a little more "character" into it.' And I tried to; but I knew it was failure, for I could only see one 'character' all the time—and that one I wouldn't touch.

"When I was in the stalls once, he and the manager sat down and put their heads together. It was dark in front, and they hadn't seen me as they came around. I heard them say something about 'A pity they hadn't a West End actor for the part.' I knew they were talking of *my* part, and it got my dander up; I knew I could act any of that hoity-toity West End company off the stage; I knew I had only to 'let myself go.'

"When I went 'on' again I determined I'd show 'em what I could do; I determined I'd show 'em they have a better comedian than any forty-pound-a-weeker. I sent them into fits. 'Hallo!' they said. The women in the wings stopped talking about their dresses to watch me. The highly-connected amateurs from Oxford and Cambridge began to give at the knees, and I could hear the leading man's heart drop on to the boards; the actor from the provinces was wiping them out! That rehearsal was the sweetest triumph of my life.

"She'd never know—she'd never know! I kept telling myself she couldn't hear of it. By the time the wig that I ordered was tried on I felt as sure of success as I was of my lines. I was soaked in the part. I wasn't *acting* the little rector—by George, I *was* the little rector, trip, face, and chirrup. And the first night came, and I was to play in London at last.

"They told me the house was crammed. All the swell critics were there, all the fashionable first-nighters. I was so nervous that the wig-paste shook in my hands when I 'made up,' but I was ready much too soon.

"I went downstairs and waited. The doorkeeper gave me a note. Of all the—! It was from Marion. A friend had brought her up to see me, and she was in the theatre. I was stunned; I thought I was going to fall. You know—every man in this room knows—that for an actor to remodel his performance at the last minute would be a miracle. I couldn't do it, it wasn't in my power, but even then I thought I'd try! I said I *must* try, though it would ruin me! And I heard my cue.

"My first lines 'went' for nothing. I floundered. The audience were ice. I saw the people on the stage looking at me aghast. Then suddenly I got a laugh; a gesture, an intonation, something I had been trying to hold back, had escaped me. The laugh went to my head—I made them laugh again! I said I'd explain to Marion—that she'd understand, that she'd forgive me—and

even while I said it, my other self, the 'self' that wasn't acting, knew it was a lie, and I was losing her.

"I couldn't help it—the laughter made me drunk. I did it all! I knew the disgust she must be feeling, but the audience were roaring at me now. I felt the shame that she was suffering with my own heart, but the artist in me swept me on. The manager panted at me in the wings: 'You're great—you're immense. Gad! you're making the hit of the piece!' The stalls were in convulsions, the gallery had got my name. 'Bagot!' they were shouting after each act, 'Bagot!' Pulteney rushed to me with blessings at the end. The house thundered for me. It was London! I knew that I was 'made'; but across the flare of grinning faces I seemed to see the angel I had lost, and the horror in her eyes."

Bagot bowed his head; his pipe had

fallen, tears dripped down his cheeks. By this time he was quite sure he had been mourning for her ever since beside a lonely hearth.

"She wrote to me next day, breaking it off," he groaned. "She wouldn't listen to reason; she said it might be 'art,' but it wasn't love."

"Did you ever see her afterward?" we asked.

"Once," he said, "years later. She married some county chap, with an estate and all that. I saw her driving with her little boy. She looked very happy, I thought. Women soon forget." After a pause he added, bitterly: "If one of you fellows"—he glanced at me—"cares to write the true tragedy of a man's life, there it is. You might call it 'The Price of Success.'"

But we all thought a more appropriate title would be the one that I have used.



AFTER THE SHOWER

THE dripping horses leave the sheltering oak,
Resume the furrow; and the plowboy calls
As cheerily as though his shoulders broad
No dampness felt. The coughing chipmunk crawls
Out of his narrow hole. The rain crow's note
Dies unborn in his black and glistening throat.

The barnyard cock struts out and bids his mates
Observe how to the sky he shows disdain.
But underneath a rose hedge, high and sweet,
Phillis and I still linger—lest the rain
Return! O blessed shower! O radiant earth!
O fragrant bower of most priceless worth!

CLINTON DANGERFIELD.

THE PETTICOAT OF VIVETTE

By Mary B. Mullett

PÈRE ANTOINE had a new Surplice. A timid, reserved Surplice, but a good deal of a Pharisee, after all.

Given to shivering at the sight of Père Joseph, the Uncleanly, dropping snuff and candle grease down his own ample front.

Shrinking with disgust, moreover, when he was bundled off to the laundry with a *canaille* of soiled garments of a more or less sacerdotal character.

The boiling and beating which followed that trip was a purification none too vigorous to please the Surplice and, as the breeze came quickly up the Seine, setting the whitened garments flapping above the *lavoirs*, he breathed it with eager satisfaction.

Hitherto the experience had all been very queer, very strenuous, most unpleasant. And it was still the same when a buxom *blanchisseuse* sprinkled him and jammed him up against a pile of wet rolls. Most unpleasant! Then

“Ah-h-h!” the bundle next to him sighed contentedly, and settled itself in a sort of satisfied way.

“A-h-h-h!” again. “That’s better. Who do you think is on the other side of me? One of those dreadful woollen things the American students wear. I’m always getting next to them, and it’s extremely irritating.”

The Surplice said nothing. Excellent reason. What was she talking about anyway?

“Who are you?” inquired his neighbor, after waiting a reasonable time for a reply.

“I’m Père Antoine’s new Surplice,” diffidently, yet with a touch of pride.

“Vraiment? *Tiens!* Que c’est drôle!”

She seemed to find it so droll that the Surplice was embarrassed, and wondered how long this unpleasant proximity must continue. He would have been glad to exchange the vivacious bundle for the dreadful woollens of the American students—whatever the woollens might be.

“Mon Dieu! how grumpy you are!” exclaimed his neighbor, finally. “If all surplices are like you I’m glad I never had anything to do with them. *Mais, tiens!*” suddenly, “maybe you don’t see the joke because you don’t know who I am.”

“I don’t know,” said the Surplice, rather stiffly.

“Oh! Well—I’m the Petticoat of Vivette!”

She paused to note the effect.

“Ah!” The Surplice attempted a knowing air. Then, desperately: “Who is Vivette?”

The Petticoat was *écrasée* with astonishment and indignation.

“You don’t know Vivette? Vivette of the *Mi-Carême*? Vivette, *la reine du Quartier Latin*? Vivette—*enfin*, Vivette! But—you must live among the dead people in the cemetery.”

The Surplice brightened up.

“Yes, we have lots of dead people over in our church. They’re buried up under the altar, you know; and sometimes I shiver lest Père Antoine should die. They might bury me with him, you know. You do know, don’t you?” Just possibly the Petticoat might be as ig-

norant of his environment as he was of hers.

"Oh, la, la, la! yes, I know!" airily. "Mon Dieu, you needn't think we never go to church. 'Sainte Marie, mère de Dieu'—oh, I know! We're not so bad as some people think we are. But we're pretty bad, just the same!" with some complacency.

The Surplice said nothing. The conversation was getting beyond his depth again. However, he felt an unaccustomed thrill. It was something like the shiver he experienced at the thought of the dead people under the altar—only—there was that difference which divides pleasure from pain. If the Petticoat would only go on! But she seemed content to chuckle mysteriously over her thoughts.

"Vivette is—charming?" asked the Surplice, at last.

He had not enjoyed a large experience in observing women. Sometimes Père Antoine attended at the rail when the holy wafers were passed, and the Surplice conceived of women's lips only as they seemed when parted to receive the communion; of women's eyes only as they sorrowed before the Mother of Sorrows; of women's hands only as they were clasped in prayer. There seemed to him to be amazing differences between these women. Men were monotonous in comparison. Perhaps this was because, being of the race of raiment, he felt a deep interest in clothes. Sometimes, when he caught the fragrance of violets or noted the exquisite fineness of some woman's apparel, he could almost have given up Père Antoine if by that sacrifice he might have belonged to a beautiful woman. He fancied that the Petticoat of Vivette thus belonged. So he said, rather diffidently:

"Vivette is charming?"

"Charming? Adorable! And gay? Mon ami," confidentially, "she has flaunted me—me, in the face of *tout Paris*."

The Surplice wondered.

"In the face of?" he repeated. He was suffering the double torment of shame at his ignorance and of an insatiable desire to be enlightened.

The Petticoat was plainly scornful. Still, one did not often find such *näiveté*—especially *chez une blanchisseuse* patronized by the Later Quarter. So she related many things!

And the Surplice was amazed, sometimes appalled, at her confidences. There was one in particular, which was about a ball where Vivette had kicked off the hat of a six-foot prince. The Surplice found himself trying feverishly to reconcile two vivid pictures; women as he had seen them, in an attitude of rapture at the communion; in an agony of prayer at the altar; mysterious, whispering, stricken, at the confessional. And women as the Petticoat of Vivette described them, in an orgy of motion, singing over their wine, with lips clinging to other lips—the Surplice trembled with he knew not what emotion.

"Hein!" said the Petticoat, suddenly. "It's my turn next. They've just taken away the woollens. *Au revoir*," and she was gone.

The Surplice did not understand. Where had she gone? Then his own turn came, and he found out! He could almost have wished that he had never been born a surplice. He was not let off with a regular ironing, but was done into a multitude of folds, knife-like and regular. When he was pinned up on the line, however, he felt unapproachably immaculate and well groomed. He looked about him complacently. He was immeasurably pleased with himself. Then he saw the garment next to him!

At first he had no idea what it was. He was conscious only of a mass of sheer white stuff, threaded with ribs of lace and breaking into ripples and falls of—was it foam? An altogether delicious piece of clothing; dainty, yet luxurious; scarcely a veil, yet capable of infinite concealment. The Surplice forgot complacency in adoration. He yearned to touch such texture, such workmanship. The woman who had fastened him on the line came along and eyed the spaces. Then she moved the mass of lace and ruffles a few inches farther away. The Surplice was in de-

spair. Then the woman moved him, too. So close to the white loveliness that their folds fell together. It was the Petticoat of Vivette!

"*Tiens!* is it you?" said the Petticoat.

"Yes," breathed the Surplice.

But the Petticoat was very silent, and they scarcely spoke again. At night the woman came and unpinned them.

"*Au revoir,*" said the Petticoat, with a revival of interest.

"*Au revoir,*" said the Surplice, with the dullness of despair.

After that, the Surplice observed things as he had never observed them before. And then a Sunday morning came when Père Antoine passed the wafers to the communicants. The Surplice wildly speculated within himself as they moved slowly along the rail, the good priest bending with murmured words over the bowed heads.

At the end of the line Père Antoine straightened himself. As for the Surplice, he was hot with indignation. He had studied face after face as they had been lifted to receive the sacrament, and he utterly disbelieved those tales of the Petticoat of Vivette. She had seen his ignorance. She had amused herself at his expense. In every one of his multitudinous folds he trembled with indignation. He absolutely refused to believe that these creatures ever sang, danced, kissed—kicked off the hats of six-foot princes. They were dull, heavy, sad, stupid. They arose now and clumped awkwardly back to their seats. Père Antoine had recrossed the choir, and was commencing on the new line of communicants. The Surplice looked at them solidly. The first half dozen? They were like those who had just gone. He ceased to look at them. He was burning at the thought of the deception which the Petticoat of Vivette had practiced on him. He looked over the women's heads at the flagged floor, where their run-down, ragged, misshapen shoes showed below their skirts. Some of them had carefully arranged their garments so as to hide their feet. The Surplice noted this and thought,

with ironical self-scorn, of the incredibleness of such creatures lifting their toes six feet in the air. He could not get over those princes!

Suddenly, at the very end of the line! A gleam of white! A gleam which sent a sudden thrill through him. This woman had not sunk down upon her knees with the demureness of long habit, nor arranged her skirts with the carefulness of self-conscious modesty. She had flung herself there without a thought of the people behind her. The dainty, high-heeled boots glimpsed beyond a tumble of lace ruffles.

The Surplice knew those ruffles.

And the Petticoat of Vivette knew him. She was half despairing, half amused. There was time for only a word or two, and the Surplice was so lost in observation of Vivette herself that he scarcely caught the significance of the Petticoat's broken remarks.

Ah—Vivette! This time the Surplice would indeed have given up Père Antoine to have belonged to Vivette. How worthy she was of that marvel of lace and fine linen—his thoughts reverted to the Petticoat which was still murmuring broken, exclamatory confidences.

"*Mon Dieu, c'est impossible!* I won't believe it. *Je refuse—absolument.* *Vrai, il est beau!* Mais, beau comme un jeune dieu. *Et comme il comprends l'âme d'une femme.* Only six days ago—and last night? No ball! This morning? The Holy Communion! Yesterday? She went to confession! Ah, *mon Dieu*, if I could only have been there. She left me at home, you understand. *Mais si!* Wore a black silk petticoat. *Pensez à ça!* I don't believe she even knew that she put me on this morning, and once—once she never put on a single *chiffon* without calculating the effect. Oh, such a—Here we go. *Au revoir!*"

They were gone. The Petticoat flashed a farewell glance at him as Vivette went down the aisle. Then Père Antoine crossed to the other end of the line and again his murmured, devout phrases began.

When the Surplice had made that

first trip to the laundry nothing could have convinced him that he would ever welcome another one. Yet a day or two after his second encounter with Vivette's Petticoat he was enchanted to be bundled off with the other soiled garments. But this time—not a glimpse of the Petticoat! Some frayed white shirts belonging to the students at the Beaux Arts, tried to scrape up an acquaintance with him, but he repelled their advances.

Then they guyed him in the slang of the studios and the cafés. He said nothing. But he could not help hearing—did he try to?—and so he still further widened his knowledge of life. Just as he was being taken from the line, one of the frayed shirts said to another :

"Have you heard about Vivette? No? She's got pious. *Certes!* All because of love, though. She's crazy over a great Provençal, a red-hot fellow *du Midi*, who's going to—"

The Surplice heard no more. That week he so longed for another trip to the laundry that he almost wished he belonged to Père Joseph, the Uncleanly.

Then, finally, a Thursday came. And at noon, an unaccustomed hour, Père Antoine took out the Surplice and put it on.

"I'll wager it's a christening," thought the Surplice.

But it was a wedding, his second one only, in one of the side chapels and—*Dieu nous garde!*—Vivette was the bride. The Surplice wondered, in an agony of hope and fear, whether the Petticoat was also officiating at the ceremony.

He was not long in doubt. When Vivette knelt—ah-h-h, the Petticoat! She was white, white, white! Like her mistress. And she fairly quivered with excitement.

How she poured out the whole affair to the Surplice while the ceremony pattered on.

"*Enfin*," she concluded, "we are be-

come quite virtuous—think of that! Oh, it's all very well while the honeymoon lasts. I thought I had seen lovers, but—*l'amour? ce n'est que ces deux!* But afterward! Not the deluge. The desert, perhaps. Maybe, maybe not. The worst is, I may never find out. What, do you think, is to be done with me? He," there was now but one "he" to the Petticoat of Vivette, "he says he saw me before he saw her—" the Petticoat chuckled reminiscently—"and he found so much beauty in me—" very grandly—"that he looked at her to see whether she fulfilled my promise. So he said she should wear me for the wedding and then—*mon Dieu, que c'est terrible!*—I'm to be put away with orris and violets, to get yellow and wrinkled and old. I—I, who have lived in the whirl of things, have seen life—life! Why, they might put you away in orris and violets and you wouldn't know the difference. Except to be glad that they hadn't buried you with Père Antoine. But me—me!"

They were rising now, and in a few moments Père Antoine was handing Vivette the pen with which to sign the register.

As the old priest took off his robes in the sacristy he was murmuring to himself:

"The Holy Mother be thanked! What a life of fever and unrest and wickedness! Already there is a new look in her eyes. God be praised! She will soon learn that peace and purity are infinitely more to be desired than pride and passion."

As the Surplice was laid away in the calm and quiet of the sacristy he thought of what good Père Antoine had said. He dreamed of Vivette and her husband drifting through the bliss of their honeymoon into the quiet—desert?—of domesticity. And of the Petticoat put away with the orris and violets. Of course, God grant that Père Antoine was right! Yet somehow—the Surplice could not help sighing as he said it.

A WOMAN'S PLEA

By Arthur Stringer

LOVE'S wave remembers not, till reed by reed
The lyric shores of youth lie ruinous!
It was not much I asked in those old days;
Where reeds may never lean Love's waves are born,
And men have lordlier missions than we know.
'Tis not through all their moods they hunger for
Our poor, pale faces; as a flame at sea
They seek us in the gloom and then forget.
'Tis when at dusk the battle-sweat has dried;
'Tis when the port is won and wind and storm
Are past; 'tis when the heart for solace aches;
'Tis when the road is lost in darkling woods,
Or under alien stars the fire is lit,
And when strange dreams make deep some idle hour.
Then would I have my name sing throbingly
Thro' some beloved heart, soft as a bird,—
And swing with it—swing sweet as silver bells!
Not all your hours I hoped to see you turn
To my poor face; yet when the wayside flower
Shone through the dust and won the softer mood,
And when the soul aspired for better things,
Disturbed by voices calling past the Dawn,
I hoped your troubled eyes would seek my eyes!
And in those days that I had cried for you
And went uncomforted, had you returned,
I could have washed your guilty feet with tears,
And unto you still grown, and gone thro' sun
And gloom beside you, holding in my arms
Hope's hostage children, while I gladly felt
The keen captivity of love re-wake
At each light touch, and in the sweet dread bliss
Of motherhood and most mysterious birth
Forgot old wrongs, and starred the hills of grief
With primrose faith and opiate asphodel!

MY DUAL SECRET

By Sarah Guernsey Bradley
Author of "The Swan," Etc.

"COME in," I said, in response to an insistent rap insistently repeated.

The little harp which stands guard on the studio door tinkled musically, and Arnan Jasper—big, handsome, magnetic Jasper, beloved of women and envied of men—came into the room.

Just why Jasper, who drops in to see me once in a dog's age, being most of the time knocking about the Continent in search of diversion, should have come into my studio on that particular afternoon, is one of the things for which fate alone is answerable. I disclaim all responsibility. I have never aspired to the job of being my brother's keeper, and I refuse to have it thrust upon me. I have all I can do, and more, too, to look out for myself.

Miss Terry, after a long and tiring sitting, was just saying good-by to me. She was looking uncommonly well that afternoon, in her big, gracefully drooping hat, soft dark furs, and perfectly fitting cloth suit, and as she stood alone in the center of the room for a moment, while I greeted the newcomer, the full glow of the late sunshine streamed in upon her through my famous west window, and I did not wonder that Jasper stared in admiration, with fine disregard of my cordial greetings.

I have seen many more beautiful women than Marion Terry.

There was Mrs. Wainwright, whose red-gold hair and exquisite coloring were my admiration and my despair. Incidentally, while I was painting her portrait, Jasper, who was spending the winter in New York, was a frequent visitor at my studio, and people did say

—but why repeat idle gossip? Then there was Mildred Kent—the girl with the wonderful blue eyes, whose face I put into my "Joan of Arc."

Yes, and many others, but Marion Terry possessed a certain charm, a certain spirituality, which these women lacked, endowed though they undeniably were with greater beauty. She was tall, and rather slight, and in her big deep-set eyes and in the coils of her luxuriant hair was the blackness of a starless night.

There is something compelling about Jasper—I have never stopped to find out just what it is—and when I presented him to Miss Terry, the most reserved, the most undemonstrative of women—she involuntarily offered him her hand. I smiled inwardly, as I remembered the stiff little bow she had accorded me on the day of our first meeting. But then, I'm not Jasper, and if I have any magnetism I'm afraid it's so latent that it is liable to remain so until the fall of the final curtain.

"This is too jolly, you know," said Jasper, glancing around my workshop, and bringing his admiring eyes back quickly to Miss Terry. "I haven't been in a studio in nearly a year."

"You haven't been in mine since I painted Mrs. Wainwright, to be exact," said I.

He glanced at me quickly, laughed in rather a forced way, and went on, rapidly:

"I declare, it's like the real thing, finding you here at work—model and all." His eyes rested critically for the space of a second on the half-finished portrait of Miss Terry.

"Yes, but the model is going," laughed Marion, moving toward the door.

"Oh no she isn't," returned Jasper, with that semi-beseeching effrontery which all women seem to like in him. "She's going to stay right here, and the old man is going to give us something to eat—aren't you, Kit?—and we're going to have a studio tea, with all the riffraff left out."

Marion glanced at me, and of course I urged her to stay. There was nothing else for me to do, but I confess I *am* tired of playing number three when Jasper's around. Jasper joined his entreaties to mine, and, in the end, to my surprise, Marion took off her furs and sat down again, quite near her second self on the easel.

"Jove, old man, you struck twelve on *that* picture," Jasper said, warmly. At the hearty praise I forgave him his effrontery of a few moments ago, for I had put the best work of which I was capable into that portrait, and I was glad to have it appreciated. For more reasons than one I wanted it to be a success.

"I am tremendously pleased with it," said Miss Terry, enthusiastically. "Mr. Bigelow has been so patient with me. I'm afraid I have been rather trying at times."

"Impossible," protested Jasper.

"Well, you have been, once or twice," I said, bluntly; when Jasper puts on his "cavalier" manner I always take the other tack. "But you were very well behaved this afternoon. I'm giving you a good long mark."

"Do we eat pretty soon, Kit?" inquired Jasper, anxiously.

"Why, surely," I said, and I hurried to the closet with an inward prayer that my discovery might not be like unto that of good old Mother Hubbard. All was well—I found crackers, and cheese, and coffee, and we had a nice little feast. Jasper was in the best of spirits, and Marion thawed out as, I was forced to admit, albeit regretfully, I had never seen her do before. They left the studio together, Jasper promising to come back after dinner.

I went to the club, and, when I returned, found Jasper waiting for me outside the studio door as I stepped from the elevator.

"Old chap, she's a winner!" were his first words.

"Who?" I asked, rather coldly.

"Who?" And he slapped me on the back. "Who?" he said again. "Why, your Miss Terry. Whom did you think I meant? Carrie Nation or Mrs. Eddy? Who is she and what is she?"

We were in the studio by this time, and Jasper was standing in front of the half-finished portrait.

"What's the matter, Jap? Having another one of those sudden attacks of yours?" Jasper is so *catholic* in his devotions.

"Well, she's certainly all to the good, and no doubt about that! Engaged?"

"Not that I know of." I did not add that I hoped she might be before very long. I did not think that necessary.

"Rich?" Jasper always believed in getting at the heart of things.

"I believe her aunt, with whom she lives, has money."

"Interested in anybody?"

I could truthfully answer that I did not know—again leaving *hopes* out of the question.

"Well, go on. What is there about her? Out with it."

"Why, there's nothing 'about her' that I know of, aside from the fact that she is the most attractive woman I have met in a long time. That I have known her five or six months, and that, as you know, I am painting her portrait."

"Well, all I can say is you're a lucky dog to be able to see her day after day!" and he sighed, half-envyingly.

"Been doing any other interesting work lately?" he asked, strolling around the studio, staring carelessly at this study and at that.

"Harry Carpenter's wife."

"Carpenter married?" asked Jasper, in astonishment.

"Why, yes, to little Dolly Emerson, the dancer—she was at the Casino a year ago." Jasper's eyes rolled heavenward, and then fell the other-placeward.

"Created no end of a sensation—nearly killed his mother. But that's six months ago, and I hear that recently several people have taken her up. Miss Terry told me of having met her somewhere."

"Disgusting!" said Jasper, hotly.

"You snob," I blurted.

"Well, I know what I'm talking about, old man." For some occult reason Jasper always seems to have inside information regarding the doings (or misdoings, to be exact) of the frail and fair.

"I don't pretend to *know* anything about her—never heard anything, in fact." Jasper looked his incredulity. "All I know is that she's pretty, and has a certain amount of go—"

"She certainly can go—very fast—about 2.05," and Jasper howled.

"And Harry is absolutely devoted to her."

"Yes, but for Miss Terry to meet her—"

"Seems to me you're terribly worked up about Miss Terry," I said, rather testily. He looked at me, laughed shortly, and resumed his stroll around the room. He stood still for a moment in front of one of the first studies for my portrait of Mrs. Wainwright. Then he wheeled around to me and said, casually: "What's happened in the last year, Kit?"

"Mrs. Wainwright has left her husband," I said, looking at him steadily.

"Is that so?" he inquired, serenely, gazing straight over my head, and lazily blowing rings toward the ceiling.

"What glorious hair she had!" he said, sententiously, turning around again to the study, which was but a faint and dim reflection of the woman's marvelous coloring.

"Yes," I said, laconically.

"I haven't seen her in nearly a year," he went on, musingly, and then added, reminiscingly: "I thought her rather attractive once—Jove!" and he turned to me, suddenly, "It's a wonder *you* didn't fall in love with her, Kit; I should have said she was just your style."

"She was married," I said, quietly.

"Cut that," impatiently; "don't pretend you're a saint."

"Well, then, to be candid, I didn't like her. I can't tell you why. Just another case of 'I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.'"

"She ought to have appealed to you," persisted Jasper. "Beautiful to a degree, clever—"

"May I interrupt these rhapsodies by asking why *you* didn't fall in love with her yourself, Jap?"

"How do you know that I didn't?" he said, Yankee-fashion.

"I thought as much," I laughed.

"You're off the track, old man. I'm heart-whole and fancy-free, and—you certainly did strike twelve on that picture of Miss Terry, old chap," he broke in suddenly; "by Jove, I know that canvas could speak if it wanted to!" His continual reference to Marion annoyed me.

"Still daft over every new face!" I said, testily.

"No, no, cured. Just admiring a fine work of art, that's all," and he laughed good-humoredly. But his eyes sought the portrait again and again, and I can't say that my spirits rose accordingly. For, as I said before, Jasper is beloved of women—the rest is mere detail.

I must have grown a bit quiet, for, after rambling on a while longer, Jasper said to me:

"Kit, what do you say to a drink, and a stroll, and the last act of some good show?"

I assured him that I was ready for anything, and we left my quiet tenth-story fastness for the more exhilarating atmosphere of glittering, gay Broadway.

It was three weeks before I saw Miss Terry again. Jasper dropped in once or twice during that time, but beyond the information which he volunteered that he had met Mrs. Wainwright on Fifth Avenue once, I knew nothing of his goings-out or his comings-in. Miss Terry's aunt was ill, so she wrote me, and, as she was "head nurse," she would be unable to give me any more

sittings until her aunt was quite well again. I went about my work in a listless, half-hearted sort of way, ashamed to confess, even to myself, what a hole some one's absence made in my existence.

Then, one day, came the familiar little tap again, and a welcome voice called: "May I come in, Mr. Bigelow?" and life changed from mere existence to Being with a very large B. Even the little harp felt the exhilarating effect of her approach, for its tiny bells pealed forth with a joyousness which they had not manifested in three long weeks.

"Well, you certainly *do* seem glad to see your model," she said, gayly, in response to my somewhat exuberant greeting.

"And the model, is she—" I returned.

"Glad? Yes, indeed, she is."

Truly she looked it. Her eyes were like stars—she radiated happiness. While, as for me—well, I suppose in all my life I have never felt so perfectly happy as at that minute. Our short separation had apparently told her quite as much as it had told me. My heart thumped joyously, and only a realization of the fact that she was not a woman to be won in a rush, kept me from uttering all sorts of foolishly precipitate things.

"It's rather nice to be appreciated," she said, comfortably. She went over to her favorite corner in the west window, and sat in the big Gothic chair. "I'll have to stay away again just for the pure pleasure of being welcomed back." And she smiled happily.

"No, no, not again," I protested. "I—we—that is, we must finish that portrait in time for the Spring Exhibition," I finished, lamely. The thought of losing her again, even for a short time, was almost more than I could stand.

"You're not ready for me this morning, are you?" she asked, glancing around the studio. Ready for her! Wouldn't I be ready for *her* if I sat on a cloud in the highest heaven, painting the Archangel Michael himself?

"I've been ready for you for a thou-

sand years," I said, fervently. I had sent her violets the day before. She was wearing them, and I think their sweetness was going to my head.

"I don't *feel* as old as that, and I'm sure *you* don't look it!" Then we both laughed, and I found my equilibrium once more.

"I've been as restless as a caged lion since you've been away—so anxious to get back to work on the picture," I added, hastily. "You can give me a sitting this morning, can't you?"

I'm afraid my voice sounded a bit anxious, so I explained that never in my life had I felt so in the mood for work as on that particular morning. And it was the truth. I felt at that moment as though I were capable of a masterpiece.

"No, I'm afraid not this morning, dear Mr. Bigelow." I think I looked the disappointment I felt. "To be candid, I didn't come for a sitting—I came—I wanted to have a little chat with you. I—I'm going away, Mr. Bigelow—"

"Away," I gasped.

"Yes, very soon—to-morrow—for a long, long time, perhaps for always."

"Miss Terry, you don't, you can't mean this," I cried rather than said, and I felt as a man must feel when he hears his death warrant.

"I may never see you again, after to-day," she spoke slowly and quietly, and her words rang true.

"Not unless I die first," I said, with great decision. "The world is a big place, but not so big but what those who seek may find."

"You *have* found Mrs. Wainwright, haven't you?" she asked, archly.

"Mrs. Wainwright!" I echoed, puzzled, mystified. What on earth did she mean?

"Never mind, I know all about Mrs. Wainwright," she said, teasingly. "Mr. Bigelow," dropping her bantering tone, "do you know, you've been awfully good to me?"

"Good to you?" I echoed. Good! The Lord knows I would have "danced on hot plowshares" if she had asked me to!

"Yes, so patient and kind. You admitted yourself that I had been rather trying once or twice."

"I lied," said I, very softly. "I wanted to be disagreeable that day."

"No, it was the truth. Lots of things were bothering me. I was blue and lonely. But you were always just the same. Whether I was down in the depths or up in the seventh heaven, it made no difference. And then, the work you have put into my portrait! Why, Mr. Bigelow, I have seen you work an hour over some little detail that another man wouldn't have bothered his head about."

"And why shouldn't I?" I said, simply.

"And I want to thank you for everything." She ignored my question. "When I was home, it came over me two or three times that I had not been over-grateful. One thinks about all sorts of things when one is sitting beside a sickbed, you know."

"I have esteemed it a privilege to be allowed to paint that picture, Miss Terry. It has been the greatest pleasure of my life," I said, evenly, trying hard not to say too much. All I could think of was that she was going away, away, away.

"Please don't flatter, Mr. Bigelow."

"I'm not flattering."

"And because you have been so good—and I am going away—and because my coming here has brought the greatest happiness into my life——" she smiled radiantly, I felt myself grow dizzy with joy. "I wanted to—why don't you help me out, Mr. Bigelow?" her eyes fairly danced. "It isn't always easy to tell what's nearest one's heart——"

My blood ran riotously—I could not trust myself to speak. And I had thought her reserved, undemonstrative, cold, almost!

"Before I go, I want you to know—I wanted to tell you—— Oh, you won't even meet me halfway," she finished, reproachfully.

"Meet you *halfway*," I cried, and I was by her side in an instant. "There's no *halfway*——" The bells on the harp

jangled noisily, and Marion looked toward the door expectantly.

"Marion, did you think I was never coming?" Jasper swung into the room, and in an instant she was in his arms and he was kissing her tenderly, perfectly oblivious of my presence.

I leaned heavily against the wall, like a helpless, dumb thing, with a dazed realization that in a topsy-turvy world of topsy-turvy people I was at once the most grotesque and the most pitiable.

"Hello, Kit, old man," Jasper said, finally realizing that I was on earth.

"Hello, Jap," I answered, more like a dead man than a living one.

"Isn't it all perfectly great, old man?" he said, buoyantly. "And I thought I had been happy before!"

"What on earth does it all mean?" I blurted.

"Mean? Why, haven't you told him, Marion? I thought you wanted to be the first to tell him?"

"I did. But somehow—well, he wouldn't help me out a bit. And—I simply couldn't, I don't know why."

"Perhaps I came in too soon."

"Not a second," I said, fervently (and Heaven knows I meant it), while Marion looked her denial.

"I guess I'll run down to Mrs. Martin's for an hour or so—you tell Mr. Bigelow, dear," and though Jasper protested, Marion left the studio.

"Jasper, are you engaged to Miss Terry?" I said, sternly, as soon as we were alone.

"No," he answered, slowly.

"Then what on earth——"

"We were married this morning," he said, quietly.

"Married! My God!" I walked over to the open window, and stood there for a minute or two in perfect silence. This was what she had been trying to tell me, and I, poor fool, poor silly, conceited fool! This was what she meant when she said that her coming to my studio had brought the greatest possible happiness into her life! For here she had met Jasper—Jasper, the beloved of women! This was the end of everything for me.

"Well, old man," said Jasper, ex-

pectantly, "aren't you going to congratulate me?"

I turned around slowly.

"What's the matter, old chap?" he asked, anxiously, "you're as white as a dead man."

"The smell of the paints, I guess," I answered feebly, "struck me suddenly—never hit me that way before. Get me some whiskey, will you, Jap? It's in that little closet to the left."

He brought me a glass of it, and I drank it eagerly.

"You're looking better, old man," he said, in a tone of evident relief, a minute or two later.

"Oh, I'm all right now," and I made a heroic attempt to muster a cheerful smile. "I think perhaps I've been working a bit hard of late. I'm going to take a long vacation as soon as spring comes. I'm sick of this dull, cooped up life; I'm going to the heart of the country, where I'll see nothing but birds, and trees, and grass from morn-ing till night. I'm sick of people."

"You're damned complimentary, Kit," and he laughed shortly.

"I mean the mob," I explained, quickly.

"And now to return to you and—and Mrs. Jasper." My throat grew parched as I uttered the name that was the symbol of Marion's new and perfect happiness. "You *know* you have my congratulations, Jap. I consider your wife the finest woman I know, yes, that I ever hope to know."

"Amen," responded Jasper, fervently, "and hundreds and thousands of adorable things besides." He smiled happily.

"But how—but when did it all happen, Jap?"

"I fell in love with her that day I met her here in your studio. You know I am worldly wise, Kit. I have lived every hour of my thirty-three years. And I have always scoffed at love at first sight. But from the moment I laid my eyes on Marion I knew that she was the one woman in the world for me."

"But you never even saw her until

three weeks ago," I said, almost petulantly.

"My dear old fellow, when it once hits you right hard, time and space count for nothing. You'll know some day." I could have knocked him down with a good grace, at his patronizing tone.

"Possibly," was all I said.

"A thousand years in Love's sight are but yesterday," he paraphrased. "What does the question of a few weeks matter, when every atom of your being cries out for one woman? I tell you," growing eloquent, "you know immediately, as unmistakably as the day knows the sun, when Fate sends across your path the one woman created for you from the foundation of the world. That's what I believe—created for you from the foundation of the world. The supreme Tragedy is when we meet her too late."

"And the roaring Farce when that one woman loves another man!" and I laughed grimly.

"What has anything as finite as Time to do with anything as infinite as the love of a man and a woman?" he said, impatiently, not heeding my interruption. "Nothing, absolutely nothing. I have seen Marion almost constantly since that memorable day, three weeks ago. We sail for Italy to-morrow, and it may be years before we come back to America again."

"But how did it all happen? I don't understand even yet." For once I was going to get at the root of the matter. Jasper did not answer me for a moment. Then he said, slowly:

"Kit, I believe I'll tell you. I know I can trust you, but give me your word of honor that you'll guard this as jealously as though it were your own secret."

"Word of honor, Jap," I answered.

"You know Marion—her high principles, her fine sense of honor, her almost Quixotic sense of duty?"

"I can imagine," I assented.

"Kit," his voice dropped, "did you ever have any idea as to just how well I knew Mrs. Wainwright?"

"No, I had a suspicion or so, that's all."

"Well, to make a long story short—

she and I played a pretty fierce game—as fierce and desperate as you care to imagine. In a moment of madness I said to her: 'If you are ever free, send for me, I'll come.' Then I went away, and in two months I had forgotten all about her. Or, if I thought of her at all, it was as of a vain, silly woman who was making a fool of her husband. I was infatuated with her for a time, she is certainly very beautiful, but love—I was no more in love with her than I am with that thing." And he pointed to an old copper censer which hung in a corner of the studio.

"About six weeks ago I had a letter from her, a desperate, heartbroken sort of a letter—telling me that life with her husband was unbearable since she and I had known and loved each other, and that before long, now, she would be free. She reminded me of my promise, as she called it. I made up my mind that the easiest way out of the whole miserable business was to come over here, see her, and end it all. I came. Then I met Marion, and for the first time in my existence I realized bitterly how blemished, and marred, and scarred was the life which I had to offer a woman." He sighed deeply. "I told you that I had seen Mrs. Wainwright on the street. What I did not tell you is that I went to her home with her, and that I lived through the most fiendish half-hour that a man could imagine. It was frightful, frightful, frightful. I'm not a cad, Kit, old chap—I tell you honestly, until I received that letter from her I had not an idea that she really cared a snap of her fingers for me. The memory of that interview will go down to my grave with me. I think I shall remember that woman's words even *after* I am dead—I believe there are some things even the dead can't forget." He bowed his head for a moment and shuddered. "But it's over and done with now, thank God. And there's only one thing worrying me. And that is that Marion will get some inkling of it in some way. She spoke of Mrs. Wainwright the other day—some one had told her that I went to your studio a good deal a year ago

when you were painting her picture. I told her that you were in love with the woman, and asked me to be there for appearances' sake."

"How did you dare!" I said, hotly. I could have strangled him at the moment.

"Why, old chap, it couldn't do you any harm, and it did me inestimable good," he said, philosophically.

"No, it couldn't have done me any harm," I answered, sadly. "That's what Miss Terry—Mrs. Jasper—meant," and a light dawned on me.

"What was that?" asked Jasper, jealously.

"Why, she said she knew about Mrs. Wainwright."

"You don't mind, do you, old chap?" His voice was concerned.

"No, it wouldn't have made any difference," I said, evenly.

"You talk in enigmas, Kit. But I never pretended to understand you. But, to revert to Mrs. Wainwright—she's a desperate woman. She would stop at nothing. Had she gone to Marion and told her the whole horrible story I should not have been surprised. So I determined to ask Marion to marry me at once. Once married, and the ocean between Mrs. Wainwright and ourselves, the danger would be practically over. So we were married this morning—very quietly, just by ourselves. Marion's aunt and the rector's wife were the only witnesses. Marion wanted to come here alone to tell you herself. You've no idea how much she thinks of you, old man."

I smiled feebly—murmuring something about it's being awfully kind of her to take an interest in an old fossil like myself.

"And how funny it was to think she had not reached the salient point of her news when I arrived!" He burst into a roar of merriment.

"Yes, quite a joke," said I, laughing, but my laugh had a mirthless, mocking sound even to myself.

"What on earth *were* you talking about?" he asked, suddenly.

"Why, I don't know," I said, which was perfectly true. I had a jumbled

recollection of dancing eyes and radiant smiles, and short-lived happiness, and a sudden bitter surprise. "You needn't feel jealous, Jap, Miss Terry—Mrs. Jasper"—for the second time I corrected myself—"hadn't a thought beyond you." He smiled with the contented, satisfied smile of a man who is perfectly sure of his most treasured possession. His apparent sense of security was maddening, but I knew, to my sorrow, how absolutely justified it was.

"I suppose you were harping on pictures," he said, lazily—"you artists haven't a thought beyond your work," he added, with fine scorn.

"Narrowing life, isn't it?" I looked at him steadily. But to-day his spirits soared above sarcasm.

"Light, and shade, and atmosphere and all that jargon you chaps revel in!" he went on, with smiling contempt.

"Yes, light and shade, and such things," I answered, musingly, with a grim realization that for me the light was a thing of the past, and that henceforth I should go quietly in the shade.

"Fall in love, old chap, fall in love. I tell you it's great," and he slapped his chest exultingly. "Fall in love, and all this stuff," and he waved his hand comprehensively, "will seem little and shrivelled and puny beside the great and everlasting fact of the lovelight in a woman's eyes, and the radiance of a woman's presence. But look out for it when it *does* hit you! You're just the stamp of man it will go hard with. That's the artistic temperament. You'll probably fall in love with some other man's wife."

"Probably," I assented.

"Now; there's Marion——" and he laughed.

"Yes, there's Marion," I echoed, softly.

"But she's not your type at all—she's too unworldly, too spiritual, for you."

"More *your* style, I suppose," I could not resist the fling. He laughed easily—nothing could ruffle him to-day.

"But I shall never cease to marvel that *you* escaped Mrs. Wainwright—I should think her beauty alone would have appealed to *you*."

"Damn Mrs. Wainwright!" I said, fiercely.

"She has done that herself," he murmured.

"You cad!" I cried, hotly.

"Don't quarrel with me on my wedding day," he said, half angrily.

"I ought to knock you down!" my voice rang loud and clear through the studio.

"But you won't," a voice pleaded, tremulously. We looked toward the door. In our excitement we had not heard the knock, and our ringing tones had drowned the sound of the harp-bells. There, more beautiful than I had ever seen her, more beautiful than I had ever dreamed she *could* be, the glorious lights in her hair creating the semblance of a nimbus, and making her look for all the world like a celestial vision, stood Mrs. Wainwright.

A glance at Jasper told me that it was necessary for me to pull myself together, so, though riotously disturbed by the curious and most inopportune coincidence of their meeting, I started toward Mrs. Wainwright, with some conventional greeting. She waved me aside. She did not so much as glance at me. Her eyes were riveted on Jasper. Her face wore a look of almost unearthly happiness. Aside from that first remark, she seemed absolutely unconscious of my presence. Once more I appeared to be cast for the rôle of a looker-on.

She stood perfectly still for a moment, as though fairly drinking in the joy of his presence. Then, with a strange, glad little cry, she crossed swiftly over to Jasper, and, kneeling beside him, kissed his hand again and again.

"Oh, Arnan, Arnan," I heard her half sob, "I knew I should find you at last. I knew that you could not be gone forever."

Jasper's face was a study of horrified astonishment. He neither moved nor spoke. He seemed absolutely stunned.

"I want to tell you," she went on, in a low, hurried tone, "that I have forgiven all those cruel words—all, quite all. I knew you did not mean them—

you could not mean them. So I came to you, Arnan. I have watched, and waited, and searched for you for many days."

She laughed low—the soft, crooning laugh of a contented child—and hid her face happily in Arnan's unresisting hand. That laugh sent the cold chills to my very knees. I looked sharply at Jasper with a horror of finding in his face the confirmation of my wildest fears—he knew her moods and tenses so infinitely better than I did. But his face was absolutely expressionless, save for that look of horrified astonishment.

"Arnan," she said, in a hurt tone, "won't you say something to me?" To my relief her voice sounded more rational, and she jumped from her abject position.

"Mrs. Wainwright"—from across the room I heard her gasp sharply—"I said everything that I had to say to you three weeks ago." Jasper spoke very slowly, and in his voice was infinite strength, coupled with infinite sorrow.

"Then those things that I have heard are true!" she blazed, a figure of incarnate rage, her red gold hair, her brilliant eyes, everything about her radiating fierce, intense hatred. "I believed they were all lies," she said the words between shut teeth, "because, even in the face of what you had told me, I would not believe that *you* were a liar. You have trampled me under foot, cast me away like a broken, useless toy—for what? For that miserable, insipid, pitiable Marion Terry!"

"Mrs. Wainwright—" Jasper was livid with rage.

"That weak little fool, without one drop of good red blood in her veins. A precious wife she'll make for *you*!" she laughed, meaningly.

Jasper sprang toward her, angrily, murderously, but I caught him by the arm.

"I could almost forgive you if you had picked out a woman, instead of an apology for a woman."

"Don't say that again, Mrs. Wainwright!" I said, hoarsely.

"Another victim, eh?" she asked, sneeringly. "Oh, I've heard all about

it. You're a precious trio. You always *were* convenient, Mr. Bigelow. What is your commission in this case? A surreptitious kiss when the king-pin is away? Or is she even more generous?"

"Mrs. Wainwright," Jasper's voice trembled, "I want you to go—to leave this room before I forget that you are a woman and that I am a man." He took a step or two toward her; he was so big, and so splendid in his anger, that the woman cowered. "Another minute"—his hands worked nervously—"and I won't be responsible for anything I may say or do. Another insinuation against my wife—" he gave the words their full force, and threw his head back, proudly.

"Your—your wife?"

"Yes, Miss Terry and I were married this morning."

"Married, my God!" I shuddered as I heard her echo my words of an hour ago. Then she laughed, horribly, mirthlessly, discordantly.

"Does she know about *me*?" she asked, suddenly, threateningly, playing her trump card.

"Yes," lied Jasper, after a moment's hesitation. "Yes, she knows about *you*," he said, steadily. I stared at him in dull wonder.

"And, knowing that, she married *you*?" She walked up and down the room excitedly. "Some one told me she was a good woman. They're all alike when there's a man in the case." She stopped in front of the easel on which stood Marion's portrait. "This you take instead of me! What soul, what passion!" she mocked. "Curse you," she cried, hoarsely, stepping very close to the picture, her whole manner changing instantly, her breath coming in short, quick gasps, her eyes blazing with an almost maniacal light. And before I could raise a hand to stop her, she clutched my palette knife and slashed the canvas to ribbons. Then, quivering from head to foot, she burst into a fit of wild, uncontrollable weeping. Hardly knowing what I did I dashed madly to her, and grasped her arm roughly with all the strength I had in my body.

"Oh, my wrist!" she cried out in pain.

"I wish I had broken it," I said, wildly.

"Kit," said Jasper, "leave her alone." I believe he thought that I would kill her. His voice recalled me. I walked to the other side of the room. I had sense enough left to realize that distance was her only safety.

"Oh, Mr. Bigelow," the woman's voice was a piteous wail, "I did not know what I was doing. Oh, I am sorry, sorry, sorry!"

"Sorry? What is sorrow compared to what you have just done?" I said, roughly. "What sorrow can ever atone for the loss of something into which I have put the best work of my life? Something for which I would almost have given my life?" The words forced themselves from me.

"Oh, Mr. Bigelow," she said, with sudden comprehension—she spoke so low that even I could scarcely hear her, and I am sure that Jasper did not—"I did not know. Forgive me, forgive me! Oh, why does everything in this world go wrong?" she cried, desperately.

"Now go!" I said, the tears blinding my eyes. "Go before I do something that I shall regret always." She felt the command in my voice, and started weakly toward the door.

"Will you say 'good-by,' Arnan?" she pleaded. He never turned from where he stood in front of the window. And, without a word from either of us, Mrs. Wainwright left the studio.

We were quite still for several minutes. Then Jasper came over to where I stood staring at my ruined picture, and, putting his hand on my shoulder, said, commiseratingly:

"Old chap, it's a shame—a miserable, beastly shame. It's all my fault—I am to blame for the whole wretched business. If there's anything in this world that I can do to repay you for your loss, all that I have is at your disposal."

"No, Jasper, no," I said, sadly, thanking Heaven for the material view he took of my loss. "You couldn't repay me—nothing could. You can't understand what such a thing means—to us artists," I finished, uncertainly. "Such

wanton destruction, such sacrilege," I explained, for Jasper was, or I fancied he was, looking at me searchingly.

"Kit, if Marion should ever find this out, the whole truth of this, I believe it would kill her."

"Heaven grant that she never may," and I can truthfully say that that was the most earnest prayer I ever uttered.

"You leave to-morrow—you go far out of the reach of the tongues."

"Yes, but the picture—you forget that she is coming back here this morning."

"Don't worry, Jap," I said, with sudden resolution. "Jap, you miserable scoundrel, do you realize just how good the gods have been to you?"

"I know how unworthy I am of it all," he answered, solemnly, and, strange to relate, I believed him.

"I'm coming in," called Marion, cheerfully. The harp bells tinkled gently, and we looked up to see Marion standing in the doorway, a trifle paler, and a shade more serious than was her wont, but with an expression of perfect love on her face that I would have given my hopes of heaven to have called into being. Jasper flew across the room to meet her, while I hastily threw a scarf over the ruined picture.

"What makes my little lady look a bit pale and tired?" asked Jasper, anxiously.

"Oh, I've been doing all sorts of things since I left here. I am a little tired. But that will all pass off," she said, brightly.

"Do you know it's cold out?" She pulled off her gloves and held out her hands before the cheerful blaze of the log fire.

"Mr. Bigelow," and she turned to me, almost shyly, "were you surprised at Arnan's news?"

"Surprised?" I laughed nervously. "I have passed beyond surprises." So I had—in the last hour or two.

"You wish me every happiness, don't you, Mr. Bigelow?"

"You ought to know that, Mrs. Jasper." But, then, there were so many things that Marion *ought* to know, and didn't.

"Do you know, I have just met the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life?"

Jasper walked over to the window.

"Aren't you interested, dear?" Marion's tone was a trifle hurt.

"Yes, yes indeed," and Jasper came back. "I was wondering what that strange noise was in the street."

"She had masses of glorious red hair—I simply love red hair—big, brown eyes, and the daintiest coloring. I think she knew I was a bride," she laughed softly, "because she almost stared me out of countenance. I entered the elevator just after she had left it."

Jasper gave a slight cough. I took off my hat, mentally, to Mrs. Wainwright. She and Marion had come face to face, and the woman had been silent.

"Something about her interested me, appealed to me," Marion continued, "and I did something I have never done before, I asked the elevator boy where she had come from. He said he *thought* she asked for your studio, Mr. Bigelow, when she came in." She looked at me inquiringly. I nodded affirmatively—the power of speech had deserted me temporarily. Out of the corner of my eye I could see Jasper grow white by the second.

"If Arnan saw her I'm afraid I'm nowhere!"

"Don't say such things, Marion, even in fun," said Jasper, huskily.

"If she hadn't been so beautiful, and if I had been alone with her, I'd have been almost afraid of her. Her eyes had the queerest expression—why, what on earth is the matter with you two? You both look as though you had seen a dead man!"

"A dead man!" I temporized. "Is that the worst thing in a living world?"

"Tell me, is anything the matter?" she persisted. "Look at me, Arnan—you look too funny for anything! And you, too, Mr. Bigelow!" She looked keenly from one to the other. Then her eyes wandered to the easel. "Pray what has my picture done, that it should be covered up like that? Isn't Marion Terry popular any more? I

didn't think that of you, Mr. Bigelow." She walked over to the easel. Jasper and I watched her in a sort of fascinated silence—her hand was on the scarf.

"Don't disturb that, please," I said, sharply.

"Why?" she asked, in a surprised tone.

"Because I ask you not to," I said, testily. She looked at me, wonderingly, and started to withdraw her hand. But by a strange caprice of Fate, one of the two rings which she wore on the third finger of her left hand caught in the scarf, and in an instant the cruelly cut canvas stood revealed in all its horribly grotesque and ghastly ugliness.

"My picture!" she gasped. Jasper's face was like a death mask. "Oh, Mr. Bigelow," she cried, tremulously, "who has done this terrible thing?"

Jasper looked at me pleadingly. I knew that at this instant I held his fate in the hollow of my hand. I hesitated a moment—to my everlasting shame I admit it. He was not worthy of the woman he loved—he was miserably, utterly unworthy. And I—I had no past to be ashamed of, at any rate. And yet it was Jasper whom she loved, while I—I had been nothing in her life but a convenient accident, a means to an end. That end was accomplished. And yet—the struggle was swift and sharp.

"Why, the fact is, Miss Ter—pardon me, Mrs. Jasper," I began, slowly, "the woman whom you met, and who has just been in here to see me about her portrait—" I looked at Jasper steadily, nodded my head ever so slightly, and he arose to the occasion.

"Mrs. Wainwright," supplemented Jasper.

"Oh," said Marion, slowly, "was that Mrs. Wainwright? She is wonderfully beautiful—Mr. Bigelow," my name came after an almost imperceptible pause. The implication irritated me.

"Mrs. Wainwright," I repeated.

"Yes," she again interrupted, "Arnan told me, you know." I glared at him, but he was looking fixedly at Marion, for he knew that on my next words depended his hopes of happiness. My voice stuck in my throat. It seemed to

me that I could not go on with the lie. Why should I? Jasper was not worth the sacrifice. Then I saw that look of unquestioning, adoring love in Marion's face.

"Mrs. Wainwright," I said, steadily, clearing my throat, "has for a long time been a trifle jealous of a portrait she had heard I was at work on. You know Arnan told you about Mrs. Wainwright."

"Yes, Arnan told me," her great dark eyes were fixed on me with an expression of absolute trustfulness. I could not fathom it.

"Several of her friends had raved over this portrait, and, unfortunately, had compared it with the one I had painted of her, somewhat to the detriment of the latter. So, just out of pure curiosity, she came here to see the picture. As she realized that what her friends had told her was true, an uncontrollable fit of rage took possession of her—"

"I have always heard that she was a woman of violent temper," interpolated Jasper, glibly.

"And this piece of vandalism is the result."

"Do you mean that *she* destroyed that picture?" asked Marion, slowly, every word fraught with absolute horror.

"I mean just that. Do you wonder that Jasper and I looked a trifle queer after going through a scene like that?"

"It is the most awful thing I have ever heard of. I know how much that picture meant to you—how much work you have put into it, and it meant a great deal to me." But she looked at Jasper as she said it, and I realized afresh just how much the picture *did* mean to her. "I am sorry from the bottom of my heart, Mr. Bigelow. Perhaps some day you will let me sit again?"

Of course I smiled and said "Yes," but I knew that when I painted her portrait again there would be "snow upon the desert."

We talked a while longer, then Marion, glancing at her watch, said: "We

ought to go now, Arnan. We have a thousand and one things to attend to before to-morrow. Good-by, Mr. Bigelow," I fancied her voice trembled.

"Good-by, I hope you will be the happiest woman in the world," I said earnestly.

"Kit, old man, good-by, good-by," he took my hand in both of his, and then he added, in a whisper: "I'm in your debt up to my eyes. I'll never forget you for this."

"Take care of yourself, my boy—and of Mrs. Jasper."

The door closed behind them. I walked over to the west window, and stood looking down upon the ugly, monotonous roofs, and it seemed to me that the sunshine had never seemed so insistently, so impertinently joyous. It was blatantly so. I heard the elevator start on its downward journey, and I realized to the full just what "this day's madness" meant to me. I leaned my head upon the window sill—I was tired unto death of everything.

I heard some one at the door—some one came into the room—oh, would people never leave me alone to-day?

"Mr. Bigelow!"—I turned swiftly, it was Marion's voice—"I have left Arnan down in the hall," she said, hurriedly. "I told him that I had forgotten something—I insisted upon coming up alone. Mr. Bigelow," and she held out her hand (which, it is needless to say, I took only too gladly), "I want you to look me straight in the eye. I want to tell you that I think you are the squarest, whitest man I have ever known. The lie was unnecessary, dear Mr. Bigelow—"

"Lie!" I faltered.

"But I am grateful, oh, so grateful to you. Don't ask me how or why, only believe me when I say that I am wiser than when I left here early this morning. I thought at first that I could never come back. I was going away from him, away from everybody, forever. I fought the one terrible battle of my life with myself, and my love triumphed. And that's just a little secret between you and me. We must never tell Arnan—I would not let him know

that *I* know for all the world. Not that it makes any difference now; nothing, of course, could do that."

She turned her head away, and in a voice in which love, and regret, and disappointment were curiously mingled, she cried: "Arnan, Arnan, why could you not have trusted me!" When she looked at me again there were two great tears in her eyes. And I stooped down and kissed them away. For the life of me I could not help it, and I think she hardly comprehended what I did.

"It would have been less difficult to have heard it from him," she said, almost apologetically, as though she feared I might think her disloyal, even in thought. "Not that anything makes any difference, Mr. Bigelow," she reiterated. "I think you know that perhaps better than Arnan does. I could not stop loving him, even if I wanted to. No matter what he was, no matter what he did, he would be Arnan still. That would be enough for me," her voice was all tenderness. "Can *I* blame

those other women?" I'm afraid she found me strangely silent.

"And, perhaps, some day, dear Mr. Bigelow, just for *my* sake—you have done so much for Arnan, will you do one thing for me?" I bowed my head.

"Will you try to forgive Mrs. Wainwright?" I bowed my head again, but I shuddered as I wondered just how much Marion knew.

"Good-by again, Mr. Bigelow, good-by, and everlasting gratitude."

"Don't even think of that," I murmured, as we went out into the hall.

"I have always believed that men's friendships were the strongest and best things in the world. But I never quite realized until to-day just how fond you were of Arnan."

"I have always been very fond of—Arnan," I answered, a shade unevenly.

"Good-by," and, as she stepped into the elevator, she added, very softly: "Remember our secret," and those were her last words to me as she went to rejoin her husband.



SUN SONG

OUT of the marsh and the mist of the north
 Into the sun, the sun!
Light on my face and a song in my heart
 Of things to be done and won.
Golden the air is and silver the dew,
Joy of life, pride of life beckon and woo,
Joy that the dark and the chill and the snow
 Passed long ago, long ago.

Borne on the silk and the scent of the wind,
 Flooded with sun, with sun,
Follow the echoes of struggle and tears
 Of life that is won and done.
Shut out the shadows and let the days die!
What of the past when the sun's in the sky?
But O, for the sound of a voice I know
 Hushed long ago, long ago.

ZONA GALE.

THE PRINCESS RACHEL

Translated from the French of Adolphe Chenevière

MANY years ago I knew a very attractive and admirable man, Carl de Stueders by name. He was a Hollander, and owned large estates in the Netherlands; but he rarely lived there.

He came to France when he was quite young, was educated in Paris, and, after two long tours, punctuated by sojourns in London and in Vienna, he came back home to Paris, as he used to say. It was impossible to tell his nationality from his appearance or his manner. He spoke French without any trace of accent. Even his humor was rather Gallic, and one might have taken him to be a gentleman of l'Île de France or of Touraine if it had not been for his distinctly significant name. When I first met him he was about thirty, hale to look at, and a great sportsman. During one whole autumn we used to meet frequently, gun in hand, and it was through chats between battues that we gradually became friends. The following year he invited me to spend some time with him in upper Austria, where he had leased a shooting-box. I was not sorry that I had accepted the invitation. The game was very plentiful and of great variety. It was a good country.

I had been there more than a week, and told Stueders one morning that I thought I would be getting ready to go. He said quickly:

"My dear fellow, don't think of it. You must stay here. A rather distant cousin of mine, the Princess Rachel Nilewska, has just come down to her chateau at Steinberg. She intends to honor me by coming out here to shoot, and I want you to meet her."

I was familiar with the princess'

name, but knew very little about her. Carl told me that she was of Polish origin; was twenty-five years of age and owned considerable property in Austria. Also, that she was an orphan, with no nearer relatives than cousins, and that she lived her life independently according to her own ideas, and had her mind firmly made up never to wear the shackles of marriage. I felt, rather than understood, that Stueders had not quite despaired of persuading her to break this resolution. He had to offer her an excellent name, wealth and a promise that she should never be deprived of the liberty she enjoyed as an unmarried woman. He even admitted to me that in coming to visit him, with a woman companion, of course, he felt that his cousin was giving him some encouragement.

I was anxious to see the princess, rebellious and mysterious as she had been described to me. She came the very next day. I saw her step down from the carriage leaning on Carl's arm. She mounted the doorstep, entered the vestibule, and with a graceful gesture let fall her long sable mantle. At the first glance I did not think she was pretty. Her features were curiously irregular. But as I studied her—an occupation in which I spent many hours later—I came to realize in her a charm different and more intense than that usual with beauty. She was tall and slender. Her face was serious, but not severe. There was a kind of haughty melancholy in her eyes; in the lines of her mouth force of will and disdain. Her smile, however, had a certain purity and serenity that changed, brightened, softened her whole face. In the quiet of reverie that

followed these smiles her gaze seemed to question the invisible, to seek communion with the infinite. That she was of noble blood one could see by her voice, her gestures, her carriage. A great simplicity characterized her. One felt this simplicity to be the elegance of her caste.

Her visit lasted three or four days. She went hunting with us, but did not take great interest in the sport. At night we talked. Her conversation was that of a woman fairly well educated, who makes no effort to astonish. She showed intelligence, acuteness and taste. She was passionately fond of music and talked enthusiastically on this subject. On all other topics her tone was that of courteous indifference. Almost as soon as the word love was mentioned she would cease to take part in the talk, or else would drop an occasional remark, tinged with doubt, fear or disdain. As Stueders had quite a number of people visiting him, conversation rarely flowed into channels of intimacy. Thus I could glean only the most superficial impressions of the character of the Princess Nilewska. Meanwhile, the night before I took my departure, I learned from Stueders himself that their marriage was practically decided upon, but that it would be delayed for some time on account of certain material arrangements that he wished settled at once. He referred to the apportionment of some considerable properties that he owned in common with others of his family. As the princess was very rich, Stueders, with instinctive delicacy, felt that he could not marry her unless his wealth were at least equal to hers. For the present, therefore, their engagement was to be kept secret.

I gave him my word, and after the usual farewells went back to Paris, where other interests soon overshadowed the importance of Carl's confidence.

At the opera one night, about three months later, I saw the Princess Nilewska in one of the smaller boxes. Automatically, almost, I tried to make out

the familiar features of Carl Stueders in the shadow. He was not seated beside Rachel. (I had acquired the habit of calling her thus to myself.) Beside her sat her woman companion, and behind them was a man I did not know. He wore a short blonde beard and heavy gold-rimmed spectacles. My curiosity was at once on the alert. During the *entr'acte* I spoke to the man in the stall next to mine. He was an old subscriber who knew everybody.

"Isn't the lady in that box the Princess Nilewska?" I asked him.

"Yes. She has leased the box from the Baron de Nallère—the man who has just failed on the Stock Exchange, you know."

"Who is the man behind her?"

"Don't you know him? Why, that's Johann Busch, the composer. Lord, they've talked enough about him lately."

Johann Busch it was. I recognized him now from the countless photographs I had seen of him in the shops of the boulevards. He was an Austrian, and the author of symphonies, cantatas and what not. He was almost a Parisian. People made a fuss over him as soon as he arrived in town. Indeed, for some months past some snobs had become more than his admirers. They had become his friends. To be just it must be added that this demonstrativeness did not overwhelm Busch. He never remained long in Paris. He was not a society man by nature, and could be persuaded to appear in drawing-rooms only with difficulty. He much preferred to spend his evenings at the theatre or at a café. He loved tobacco and he loved beer, and was most at home when seated among his artist comrades, a pipe between his teeth and a high foam-topped glass before him.

I got these biographic details from my neighbor, who was a kind of human directory. I believed all he said until he added:

"The old man is quite a beau, too. There isn't the slightest doubt that he's here to-night to see La Varini dance. I'm sure he didn't come to hear Meyerbeer's music—he hates Meyerbeer. I'd like to bet that in half an hour he'll be

behind the scenes. If you go back there you'll see him bowing and scraping, smiling and ogling with his rather dull eyes—for, it appears, he's exceedingly short-sighted."

I advanced as an objection that the composer's myopia rather argued against the statement that he was fond of the dancer. My informant stood his ground, and said that Busch had been in love with La Varini for a long time; that he had followed her almost everywhere, to Vienna, to Milan, and that he had said he loved her more off the stage than on because of the beautiful, rare melody of her voice, especially when she spoke her melodious Tuscan mother-tongue, of which Busch could not understand a single word. He had been known to say that this was an advantage, since he could listen to the music of her utterance without being distracted by the sense of what she was saying.

My interest, however, was more keen to know what people were saying of the Princess Nilewska. I put the question to my all-informed neighbor. He was quite prepared.

"Oh, she's engaged to Stueders. You know Stueders, don't you, the man with the rifle, the man who kills four partridges at a time? But this is a game where he'd better look out for himself, for it is very possible that—"

"You mean that the princess—"

"She'll get all tied up in her emotions over this fellow, and as she's proud and independent in the extreme, no one can say just what may not happen. As for him, why he's a simple conqueror."

"The Austrian?"

"Of course. The sonata-maker. My dear fellow, these musicians are terrible, and the influence of certain harmonies on women is beyond imagining. A curious phrase, a charming discord, and they're all topsy-turvy. The nervous ones especially—and I should say that the lady in the box belongs to the category. I've watched her steady, clear eyes, her disdainful air as if spurning all in life, and—I wouldn't be sure of her."

"Oh, nonsense! You astonish me. How old is Busch?"

"About fifty-two."

I indulged in a smile from the vantage point of my thirty-three years.

"I beg your pardon," my informant corrected me. "I'm fifty-three and—well, you never can tell."

I apologized and changed the topic of conversation. It annoyed me to think that the charming, mysterious Princess Nilewska should become enamored of the musician with gold-rimmed spectacles. I could see him, in my mind's eye, smoking his pipe mornings in his dressing gown and embroidered slippers. And I was sorry for her sake when I recalled Stueders, polished, handsome and big in muscle. I have got into the way of expecting physical accord in human couples, and when I don't find it I have a certain feeling of irritation. Of course, in the present circumstances I had ample other reasons for regret. I liked Stueders very much, and could not bring myself to believe that his engagement was going to end disastrously.

Yet the facts of the case seemed to contradict my incredulity.

During the next few weeks Johann Busch gave a series of orchestral concerts, interpreting his own works. All Paris attended these artistic solemnities with devotion. Rachel was unfailingly to be seen in one of the smaller stage boxes. People were beginning to talk about her and Busch in clubs and drawing-rooms. As yet, however, indulgent rumor accused her merely of an excessive form of snob-worship. I myself was convinced of her sincerity. I believed her incapable of playing the comedy of admiration or sympathy either as a fad or fashion. If she was seen so often with Busch, if she thus dared public opinion, it followed that she must have for the man or the artist—one or the other—a real, profound attachment that she could not resist. Consequently I avoided meeting her again: I might have—in fact, I ought to have paid her a visit. She had asked me to call when I bade her good-by in Austria; and I could not pretend to be unaware of her presence in Paris after the newspapers had published the fact in their society columns. But I felt that, if I met her,

I should be embarrassed in speaking of Stueders, and that if I did not speak of him I should be guilty of disloyalty.

This indecision was beginning to be an annoyance, when one morning Stueders called on me. He was very nice and talked pleasantly, chatting of a hundred unimportant matters. Nevertheless I could see that he was simply appearing easy in mind. I didn't dare even to mention Rachel's name. I felt that he was acute enough to understand my reticence. Perhaps he appreciated it, for, just as he was about to go, he said:

"My dear chap, I don't wish to beat about the bush. I think it a sure sign of vulgarity. I'd like you to know that life is playing me rather hard just now. I'm groping in the darkness of doubt. Will you get some news for me about the person in whom I'm interested? Call, ask questions, be indiscreet even. So long as I do not hear her bid me farewell I shall believe in her. Try and find out, please, what I wish to know. I am going to Amsterdam for some time. Write to me there, will you?"

I had bowed my acquiescence to his request, and without another word he went out, smiling rather sadly.

The next day I called on the princess. She received me with perfect naturalness and reproached me for not having called before. Then she added, with a malice that abated no jot of her proud air:

"I suppose that you did not call before on account of your friend? You didn't know what to think?"

It always irritates one to be read and to be advised of the fact at the same time. I judged that my salvation lay in being perfectly frank.

"Absolutely," I replied. "I didn't know what to think."

"And now you've come to find out—?"

"No, madam. It is not curiosity that has brought me here. But it seemed to me that some day or other you might have something to say which you could tell me more easily than—Stueders. I have come to say to you that I am at your service."

"Oh, an intermediary, as it were," she said, ironically.

"The title is unimportant so long as I can oblige a friend."

"Oblige him—how?"

"By telling him what he ought to know."

"You mean the truth?"

"I do."

"Very well. My only wish is that you may understand my position and that, if it is necessary, you will some day tell Carl that I have acted in full loyalty toward myself and toward him. Now, I haven't the least doubt that people can't say anything bad enough about me at present, and that they're doing their best. Their gossip is of no interest to me, but I did wish to give Stueders some explanation of my conduct. Long ago he promised me that I should always be free, perfectly independent. He must have forgotten all about that promise, because he wouldn't listen to a word I had to say. If I wished I might refuse now to speak on the subject. Yet I shall consider the matter with you for my conscience's sake."

"You must know that I admire Johann Busch with my whole soul. He is a great artist. I worship music and the genius of the man has made me captive. I am not sure that my heart belongs to him, but I do know that admiration trenches on the borders of love. You see, I am perfectly frank. I still consider myself as bound to Stueders, despite the fact that I have not given him my word. I have a certain honor in my feelings, and my attitude justified Carl in hoping. He may have reason to think ill of me, but I hope that he will not. I would sacrifice my dream for his sake, especially if he will sacrifice his self-love for me. But let him not force me, as he threatened, to break violently with Busch. Let him not be governed by his pride if he really loves me. Let him trust in my probity as a woman and a patrician. I do not wish to be betrothed to him without being in love with him. Just now I myself don't know whether I am or not. Let him be patient and absolute recompense will be his. If he bears with this trial that I also undergo

as well as he, he will show himself a gallant gentleman and a clever man. You may tell him what I have said, if you will."

There was nothing for me to argue in her statement, and I simply bowed acquiescence. I reassured her of my devotion to her service, and wrote to Stueders detailing the interview.

Stueders replied, thanking me warmly, but making no single comment on her stand. Nor did he mention any plans he had for the future.

A few days later Johann Busch left for Rome, where some music festivals were in progress. Rachel remained in Paris. Stueders had returned, and I came to the conclusion that all would go well again. I met the princess twice. We talked of everything and of nothing. The one allusion to our confidences that she made was:

"I am hearkening as time goes by. There is no safer counsellor than time."

I knew that she saw Carl frequently and was prepared for a prompt solution of the affair.

One day I got a telegram from her in which she begged me to come at once to see her. When she received me I observed that she was more nervous than usual and very pale. Her face was drawn, her voice and gestures sharp and tense.

She told me that Busch was very ill. He had long been suffering with his eyes, but the ailment had suddenly become much more serious. He was threatened with blindness. Rachel had offered to go to him in order to comfort and take care of him. But she wished first to have Stueder's permission to go.

She uttered the word "permission" in a strained tone.

"Had he allowed me to go," she went on, "I might have remained here. In any case I should have returned very quickly. I would have loved him out of gratitude. I would have married him. But his denial removes my sense of obligation. I was going to give a dinner to-night in the hotel. I should have had Carl sitting opposite me. I tell you this so that you may understand the extent of my indulgence to

him. As soon as I heard that Busch was ill, I countermanded the invitations on the ground that I was suddenly obliged to leave town. Then I sent for Stueders. He came, and wanted to know where I was going and the meaning of my pleasure. I told him that I had not yet made up my mind, that I wished to confer first with him. I told him the whole truth, my impulse to go and comfort and take care of a friend so grievously afflicted. As he heard me he became white with rage rather than regret, and reproached me with wishing to become the servant of a dissipated, worn-out play-actor. The more excited he grew the calmer I became. I told him that my mind was decided now. I would go to Italy, since he did not love me well enough to understand me and have faith. Then these words escaped him: 'Very well, make your choice between the gentleman and the trouper.' I replied: 'I do.' He bowed and went out.

"So I am leaving to-night. I have just written to Stueders, showing him the range of his folly. I gave him a chance to love me, what is more, to forgive me, which is the real test of love's nobility. He did not profit by the occasion. So much the worse for him—perhaps so much the worse for us both.

"Come what may I am going to Rome. I beg of you to continue to be my friend, even though this friendship can no longer be of avail to Stueders. . . . But when shall we see each other again?"

These were the last words Rachel said to me. I was very sad when I left her. I knew that she was leaving for Rome that night.

I saw Stueders on various occasions later and he spoke of her quite freely. Now that all was at an end between them he seemed to have lost his air of fearsome reserve; and it seemed to me that in imparting his confidences his wounded love and pride were assuaged. He still loved, perhaps even more deeply than before, for he sought nobly to excuse the woman who had abandoned him.

"There is nothing between her and Busch," he said, "no matter what people say of them." He was angry, moreover, against her family, who were using every means in their power to restrain her. As soon as she had broken with Stueders, the princess had sold her properties in Austria to have plenty of ready money at disposal. It was necessary, however, that the imperial signature be affixed to the papers in order to make the transaction valid. The family of the princess in their hostility exerted their influence so that the imperial ratification was denied. These valuable estates then fell under sequestration and increased in value without profiting Rachel. Her income was reduced to a fourth of the fourth of the revenue from them until such time as the emperor saw fit to accord the authorization of sale. She was on the next step to poverty. Her family believed that this privation would bring her to terms, that she would leave Johann Busch. But she stood her ground immovable; and from this time dates that career of folly, of devotion, of woe, of grandeur, the memory of which seared my heart, so that now, after so many years, I cannot think of it without a pang.

You see, I became the friend of this woman who had been cast out of her world. I was swayed toward her by mixed emotions of pity and admiration. At the time when Carl Stueders hardly ever alluded to her with a word or two and a sigh, I used often to talk of him to her, of his broken life, of all he must have suffered and must still suffer. She, however, blamed him for his pride, the cause of all unhappiness.

"The man who is really in love," she used to say, "has no room in his heart for self-love."

Poor little princess! Perhaps she was right. For where now was that pride of race that formerly revealed itself in spite of her? Her state now was that of humility, of servitude, even, which is often the final lot of women that love supremely. Busch, who was be-

come blind, had need of her as constantly as an infant requires its mother. She had brought him back from Italy and taken him to a lonely spot on the coast of Normandy, about a hundred yards removed from an obscure summer resort. They lived in a house surrounded by shivering pines and wind-twisted oak trees, sad as their souls. There they dwelt, buried, lost, forgotten of all the world.

Carlotta Varini, the dancer, gave no sign of life to the broken-down artist whose homage had once been so flattering to her. Busch suffered under the forgetfulness that this silence implied. Rachel, abased in her resignation, used to write letters to the dancer at his dictation. He had the remaining spark of decency not to speak of his love in these letters, but he begged her affectionately to write him. Sometimes as he dictated a letter he would fall to humming the airs of Varini's ballets. Rachel would write on, swallowing her sighs, but easing her heart with the tears the blind man could take no note of.

Nevertheless, he had not quite given up his art. He tried almost feverishly to compose. And all through the dolorous night of his blindness he was haunted by a craving for the sun. The word was always on his lips, as a cry of defiance to the rays of eternal light. In his compositions he sought to evoke the joy of the lost luminary. When he sat at the piano his fingers played incessantly the same triumphal phrase as he sang at the top of his voice, slowly and solemnly, the same word again and again: "The sun! The sun!" Gradually the melody diminished in a murmur of arpeggios, a kind of transition into night, a music twilight, and the song faded into extinction little by little, like the expiring glow of the setting sun.

Rachel took down his compositions and suffered with him in their creation. She had had no experience in the work, and frequently made mistakes of transcription. Then he would break into a fit of anger, upbraid her, insult her. He even went so far as to cry out one day that if Varini were beside him no such

errors would be made, because Varini was a born musician. And Rachel kept her peace, esteeming that it would be a trait of commonness to avenge herself by abandoning him. She felt that it was worthier to immolate herself there, uttering no word or regret for all the sacrifices she had made. She experienced even a strange sweetness at the thought that she of all women remained faithful, faithful, though betrayed, and in spite of herself, to this man for whom she was the last hope, the last illusion, the last ray of light. And things went thus for a long, long time.

Two years had elapsed since she gave up everything in life for the man, when Busch got it into his head that he must go to Trouville to hear a series of violin concerts to be given by one of his friends who had become famous. It was the height of the season. Rachel knew that she would be seen by Parisians there who would stare at her. But she did not shrink before the brunt of public opinion.

It was not long before she was discovered in a box, seated beside Busch. Several gentlemen bowed to her from a distance. One of the more courageous, a man who had known the composer pretty well, called on her in the box. They talked of various unimportant matters, and then the visitor said, suddenly:

"I suppose you've heard the awful news about poor Stueders."

She signified that she knew nothing.

The man was sorry now that he had said anything and would have avoided the subject. There was something compelling, however, in the steady, clear glance of the princess. Thus it was that she learned how five days ago Stueders had been accidentally killed. He was shooting hares on his estate. One of his wardens was handing him a loaded gun. The weapon slipped from Stueders' grasp and, in attempting to prevent it from falling, the trigger was released. The ball imbedded itself in his brain and he fell to the ground dead.

Rachel managed to find some com-

monplace expressions that were calculated not to anger the blind composer, in whose visage she could read an expression of irony. Then, recalling the pride and distrust of Stueders, which had led her to her present condition, she braced herself against emotion. She said to herself that the least sign would be interpreted by her informant as a regret for the world she had lost; and she had the stubborn courage to say, as if speaking a funeral sermon:

"A life without purpose—a death without achievement."

As she led her charge out of the hall along the corridors, there was a mild determination in her noble carriage that stopped the ready smiles of the fashionable people who gazed after her.

Two, three more years dragged their slow length away. The composer and the princess still abode in their little house in Normandy, bound by a tie of fatality. He could not have dispensed with her care; she, living in a state of servitude in which she gloried.

And all the time her pity for him, who was more a slave than she herself, was active in his behalf. She sought constantly for some means of curing his malady. She had consulted famous oculists on more than one occasion. At length, an English physician, whom she had summoned, announced that he believed he could do something for the musician. He undertook the case, worked devotedly, and finally had the satisfaction of partly restoring the blind man's sight.

During the course of treatment Rachel hovered about in a kind of fever. It was as if a man were being gradually raised from the dead. She saw Johann learning as a child little by little to find his way here and there, to help himself, to regain independence of action. To crown all the good she had wrought for him she had a miracle performed.

But her joy was veiled with tears. Sometimes in her inmost heart she regretted remorsefully the days when her lover could not see her, but knew her only by her voice or the touch of the

hand that guided him. For as sight returned gradually to his eyes he seemed to be surprised, deceived even. She was not the woman he had known, and whose love he had accepted with pride even though he did not love her. Rachel felt this. She studied herself in the glass. She saw that her features were faded from sadness and her lonely life. Her smile had lost its glow. Youth and beauty had vanished. In her desolation of soul, from which suspired no single vain reproach, she sought to avoid the glance of the man she loved. Light had been restored to those eyes, but in them shone no ray of pride for the love she had bestowed, no slightest trace of tenderness.

And he had not the nobility to lie, to whisper a word of love to the woman grown old before her time—for him and through him!

He held his peace. This silence was the crime he committed.

She waited for one word; lie or truth, it would have been a joy, a consolation to the last hour. He never spoke it.

From that time life became an agony. Busch took up again his roaming career and was often away from Rachel. He would leave her either in Normandy or in Paris, while traveling all over Europe, appearing in the big cities to reclaim his fame of other days. He never thought of the woman left behind; he was not even ungrateful—he was simply unconscious of her.

Unconscious—this word, in which is implied so much of indulgence and of forgiveness, was her own description of him. She told me the whole story quite simply, with no single word of reproach.

She seemed to be content to have had one great love in her life!

The last time I saw her was in Paris, in the spring of 1895. Busch was in Vienna, supervising the production of his latest work at the Ring Theatre. I asked the princess whether she was going to Vienna to be present at the first performance.

"No," she said softly, "I am very tired. I am going back to Normandy."

"Going back to Normandy." There she would be at home. There she had loved, had lived her dream, had had her share of human emotion. She went away and I did not see her again. A few days later she fell seriously ill with influenza. I was not advised of her illness. Moreover, it was very short. I got the news of her death through the commonplace medium of an official letter. Later I learned that she had been sick only five days and that she died without a single friend at her bedside, almost at the hour that all Vienna was applauding the triumphal success of Johann Busch's opera.

I learned also that in the suit over the disposition of her Austrian properties Rachel had won her case. She bequeathed to her family all her immense fortune, excepting only an annuity of thirty thousand francs, which she left to Johann Busch.

The composer did not enjoy it long. Two years later he died of general breakdown, the result of a pulmonary affection and alcoholic excesses.

His name assuredly will live; perhaps the name of Rachel Nilewska is more deserving of immortality. To my mind, the genius of the artist dwindles in the vulgarity of the man; while, on the other hand, no martyrdom of love was ever purer, grander and more nobly simple than that of the woman.



THE MAID AND THE MONEY

By Bertha Muzzy Bower

THE maid rode slowly down into the *coulée*, holding Baby's reins loosely in one hand, while she devoured the contents of a letter written upon "the very latest" in stationery.

She had read the letter before leaving the post office, but that did not matter. Much reflection had demanded the exact wording of certain sentences. Just now she was endeavoring to read what the writer had left unsaid—a very absorbing process, as many of us can testify.

"I'll bet they think I'm next thing to a blanket Indian!" she asserted to Baby's sentient ears. "They'd never think of asking me, if it wasn't for—that shows what money will do. I'll go, just to show them I'm half white, anyhow."

Baby threw up his head and glanced back up the hill and the maid gathered up the reins mechanically, thinking, the while, of a certain "tailor-made" she had seen in the catalogue which Mame Brownlee had got from Philadelphia. She thought she could send for the costume; it cost thirty-eight dollars and ninety cents, but she could afford it now—yes, and a dozen more just like it. There was a certain exhilaration in the thought.

"Steady, Baby!"

She wondered how she would look in one of those "straight fronts." She didn't like the look of them a bit, but she supposed they were all the rage, and she'd have to get used to them.

She had not yet decided which would yield the greater satisfaction to herself and balm to her wounded feelings—to sail in upon her supercilious cousins an up-to-date, tailor-made young woman, or to drop down upon them as they evidently expected to see her—a dowdyish

hoyden from "out West." If she did that, she would take with her a trunkful of stunning things and blossom out suddenly, to their amazement and chagrin. And she would not use any slang or bad grammar. She wondered if her cousins ever said "ain't" or "won't." Oh, well, she could speak correctly enough, if she only took pains to remember, but it was a perfect nuisance. She would almost as soon stay home and be done with it.

Here Baby gave a shrill, welcoming whinny, and the maid awoke to her surroundings and looked behind her. A horseman was galloping steadily down the road; the hoof-beats stilled in the loose sand. The girl faced quickly to the front and waited with elaborate indifference.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" she greeted coolly, when he slowed to a walk beside her, and folded her letter deliberately. She wanted to ask him why he had not been near the ranch for the last month, but instead she remarked politely that it was a nice day.

The man smiled ironically and slid over in the saddle so that the foot nearest her was withdrawn from the stirrup.

"Very nice day," he acquiesced, gravely. "It looked a little like rain this morning, but the wind changed and drove the clouds south of us. I expect it sprinkled some, along the Highwoods. The weather bureau has a shower due to-morrow, if it don't switch off and go somewhere else. This has been a backward—"

The maid shot a sidelong glance from under her lashes.

"Oh, shut up!" she commanded, and smiled reluctantly.

"Come down off your stilts, then,"

admonished the man. "You know better than to go talking weather to *me*—how are you, anyhow?"

"If you had wanted to know very bad, you'd have come to see," she said, resentfully, and immediately bit her lip till it was painful. She had not meant to show that she had noticed his absence.

The man looked at her keenly.

"Did you want me to come?" he asked.

The maid tossed her head.

"I wasn't particular, but I did wonder if you was huffy about something. I don't know as it mattered, though, if you had been."

"I hear you're going back East," said he, wisely changing the subject.

"Who told you that?" demanded she, facing him squarely for the first time.

"Billy said you told him so. He said some of your high-toned relations had been writing to you to go and make 'em a visit. I suppose"—cynically—"you'll go back there and buy an automobile and a snub-nosed poodle dog and be a howling sport."

"Maybe—and maybe not. A good saddle horse suits me pretty well—but I'll buy me an automobile, too, most likely. I ain't so dead sure about the dog. I ain't stuck on dogs a little bit."

"It's for all the world like these two-bit novels," said the man, complainingly. "When it ain't an Eastern girl that comes West and stampedes all the cowpunchers off their range, it's a Western girl that has a big wad of money left to her by an uncle—yours was an uncle, wasn't it?—and goes East to her swell relations and cuts into the upper crust—and so on."

"Well, you have to go somewhere to have things happen," contended the maid. "I'd never know the first thing about life, if I stayed here always. It's the same old thing, year after year—riding horseback over the hills, talking to cowpunchers and going to a dance once a month in the winter time. I want to get out where I can see something—and—and live!"

"That's all right," said he, tentatively, "but I've known people that lived and were happy, and never had to stray off

the home range to do it, either. And I never heard them complain about not knowing life. But, of course, things ain't like they used to be with you." There was a note of regret in his voice. "A month ago you was just Rena Jackson, and a fellow couldn't be called crazy if he did have some hopes of throwing a loop over your head, one of these days. Now, you've got money to burn—and the home range is too small to burn it in. A quarter of a million does make a person feel different, I reckon."

"I gave pa half of it," said the maid, simply, "to buy him a bunch of thoroughbred stock. He always did want to work into thoroughbreds. He's going East to look at some. I tried to make him take the rest of the money to use, but he wouldn't. He said for me to spend it myself and have a good time with it. I don't know where to start in, though. I got me an awful sweet little gold watch and chain, and this ring. It's a real diamond, and it cost a hundred and fifty dollars." She drew off a gauntlet to show him, and a weight lifted from his heart as he leaned over to look.

Gossip had told him of the ring, and gossip had assured him that it was an engagement ring.

"And I bought Baby of Jack M'Carty," went on the maid. "I always did want him awfully bad."

"Want Jack M'Carty?" The man could afford to tease, now that he had been set right concerning the ring.

"Sure thing!" The maid's tone was ironical in the extreme. They were drifting back to their old manner, and she laughed contagiously at thought of wanting Jack M'Carty, the half-witted sheep man who had owned Baby. "Baby's the finest little saddle horse in the country," she asserted, confidently. "He is awfully gentle, but he's always full of go. I wish I could take him with me, but I can't. And I hate to leave him at the ranch for the boys to ride to death——" she paused, suggestively.

"Better leave him with me," he volunteered, just as she had hoped he would

do. "You know I'll take good care of him, and I'll see that nobody rides him—"

"You can, if you want to," returned she, much relieved at the offer. "It won't hurt him a bit. But the boys haven't any judgment about a horse. They'd ride him to death just to run down a jack rabbit—oh, look over there!" They had ridden to higher ground and the maid was pointing off to the right excitedly. "See that coyote, eating off that dead sheep. Think we can get him?"

For answer, the man began quickly to untie his coiled rope. There was a laugh in his brown eyes as he glanced at the maid from under his hat-brim.

"Coyotes are a heap harder to run down than jack rabbits," he reminded her, but the maid was off and away, calling over her shoulder:

"Hurry up! He's started!"

The man pressed his spurred heels against his horse's sides and darted after her, thankful that he had chosen the fleetest horse in his string for this day's ride.

The coyote had halted an instant to sniff the air suspiciously, but this sudden move frightened him. He dropped his head, straightened his gaunt body in a long leap, and a gray streak slid rapidly away over the prairie grass.

"Baby!" The maid leaned forward with glowing cheeks. Baby answered the call by thrusting forward his nose and laying back his ears.

"Gee, he can go, all right!" shouted the man approbatively, and the red lips of the maid parted in a smile. She was leading the race by a length, and Bert Rogers was riding Flopper—Flopper, who held the proud record of setting half the boys afoot on circle, twice that spring.

But Flopper had galloped hard and long at his master's behest, that the man might gaze into the dangerous depths of the maid's blue eyes. Baby had loitered dreamily along the trail and was unwearied. The maid did not consider this. Her mind was dwelling upon the prospective double triumph of running down a coyote and of outdistancing

Flopper. If she could only do both, she felt that she might count this day well spent. Bert Rogers would be fittingly punished for holding himself aloof this last, long, eventful month.

The gray streak slipped into a wash-out and out again, speeding up the opposite slope. Baby, coming after, cleared the deep gully with a bound and took the hill at a run. Flopper cleared also, and thundered up the hill four paces behind. The maid looked back and smiled tantalizingly at the man, but he resisted the temptation of striking with his spurs. The chase was but fairly begun, and Flopper was notoriously a "stayer." Bert felt that he could afford to wait. Flopper would get his "second wind" and beat Baby yet—Baby and the maid. With him, it was not so much a question of catching the coyote as of holding his own—yes, and a little better—with Baby and the maid.

The summit gained, there was a level two miles of running, with badger holes to dodge and an occasional, sunken bowllder to avoid. Flopper crept up to Baby's flank, then ran fairly alongside. The maid eyed him apprehensively and looked ahead at the gray streak, which was larger now and longer, but which still slipped unswervingly away before them, making unequivocally for the "breaks" which guarded the river.

"We're gaining ground," said the man, triumphantly—and ambiguously. Whether he meant in love or in the chase—or both—he did not explain.

"We must head him out of the breaks," said the maid, doubtfully. "Once he gets in there, he's gone. We can't follow."

"I know it," returned the man, and glanced critically at Baby's splendid running. Could he afford to turn aside in a wide half circle and give the maid the advantage of a straight run? But could he let Rena make the detour?

"You keep straight on ahead," he commanded, suddenly. "I'll ride around and turn him back toward the level."

For a full minute the maid wavered. Bert was already circling off to the left, leaning low in his saddle, watchful, de-

termined. She twitched Baby's rein and followed him. If she won, it must be fairly. She would not allow his chivalry to give her an advantage, just because she was a woman. It must be as man to man.

Bert, hearing hoof-beats behind him, turned his head just as the maid raised her whip and struck Baby the first blow she had ever given him. Again they rode side by side, neither speaking, but both understanding that it was not the coyote—it was a trial of speed between them.

The coyote halted long enough to observe this new tactic, stretched his tense muscles, lowered his head and swung regretfully away from the refuge for which he hungered. He was full from feasting and his best speed was past. He took to dodging and turning this way and that, in a vain effort to shake off his pursuers. His head drooped lower, his bushy tail dragged in the crisp, prairie grass. He heard the man give a shrill, exulting whoop, and terror gripped his heart. He wheeled short off and dove into a shallow, grassy *coulée*. There were great deserted badger holes in the clay banks on the farther side. He would creep into one—back, back into the hill, where it was dark and cool and silent.

But the *coulée* was wide and the nearer rim but a gentle slope, down which the horses thundered like a whirlwind—and Flopper was holding his own and, having found his second wind, was holding it without visible effort. The maid could understand now how the cowboys felt when they saw Bert saddling Flopper to lead circle. Baby was straining every muscle to keep alongside, and the whip had stung his flank many times in the last half mile.

The gray streak had resolved itself into a tired, panic-stricken animal, crouching nearer to earth and running heavily. The man straightened in the saddle and widened the loop in his rope, holding the coiled surplus loosely in his left hand and with the free end tied securely to the saddle horn.

"He's our meat, now," he remarked with much satisfaction, and spurred

Flopper nearer. The coyote ducked warily and whirled away, but to the horse trained to dodge back and forth in a herd cutting out cattle, this was but child's play. He wheeled and kept pace with the quarry.

The man's arm uplifted and the loop circled, slowly at first, then faster, cutting the air with a subdued "who-o-o, who-o-o" till, with a sudden swish, it shot through the intervening space and settled relentlessly over the slim, gray body and tightened as the man turned his horse away and braced himself—but not on account of the coyote. He must meet Flopper's inherent distaste of being pressed into service as a temporary anchor.

Horses, like men, have individual peculiarities of temperament, and Flopper was no exception to the rule. He would run until his knees weakened under him, and do it gladly. He would dodge and turn an animal and think it good fun, though his sides were wet with perspiration. He would not settle back as a good rope horse should do, to hold captive even a jack rabbit. He had a way of expressing his objection which was forcible and convincing, and Bert Rogers knew it, but he took the chance. Even Flopper could not always buck, and when he had finished there would still be the coyote fast in the loop—perhaps. As I said before; Bert Rogers took the chance. And there was the maid, sitting upon her panting chestnut, watching him intently.

"Oh!" The maid did not know of Flopper's prejudice, and was not prepared for his acrobatic outbreak. She retreated a short distance up the slope and waited respectfully while he vented his spleen at the fancied indignity, and watched the superb horsemanship of the man with wide eyes and quick, in-drawn breaths, while the coyote was yanked unceremoniously this way and that, passively yielding.

And then Flopper did an unforgivable thing. He reared straight up and went careening recklessly over backward, and with him went the man. The maid gave a sharp, horrified cry and dashed for-

ward, just as Flopper picked himself up and shook himself with guilty defiance. He walked off a few steps and stopped, eying his master inquiringly.

He had not meant to kill the fellow, but he meant to convince him once for all that he was not a rope horse. Even a horse cannot have a dozen specialties, and his specialty was speed and endurance. He hoped Bert Rogers would remember that fact hereafter. The coyote raised his head and gazed stupidly at the group, too weary and disheartened to think of escape.

The maid knelt and lifted the man's head in her arms. He was not "deathly pale," as is proper to fallen heroes—but then, he was so dreadfully tanned. And his forehead, when she pushed back the mass of damp hair, did look rather white. The maid bent impulsively and kissed the white streak. Then, seeing he did not move, she grew bolder and laid her lips upon his—once, twice.

The man opened his eyes and looked quizzically up at her and the maid blushed furiously. His eyes did not hold the shadow of death, or even of pain silently borne. There was amusement—and something beside.

"Are you hurt?" She could think of nothing else to say.

"Er—yes, I think I am." The man lied, and she knew it. She would have withdrawn her arms indignantly from around his neck, but the man held them

there. And he was not noticeably weak. "Rena," he said, solemnly, "if it wasn't for that cussed money of yours I'd ask you to marry me."

"I—you—maybe I can get pa to take the rest," said she, demurely, looking away to where Flopper was staring haughtily at the coyote, which was striving furtively to creep away. Flopper was so incensed at the effrontery of the beast that he settled back and was holding the rope taut of his own accord, which is added proof that some horses come near to being human.

"I wish to goodness you would," said the man, still holding her hands tightly in his. "I wondered, just as I was going over, if you would care if I got killed—so I laid still till I found out. Oh, you can't get loose!"

"But the coyote will," ventured the maid, evasively.

"If it wasn't for the money," persisted the man, "if I had asked you two months ago, would you——"

"Yes, I would—so there!" flashed the maid, tempestuously. "And I don't care for the old money, anyhow. And I don't want to go East and ride in any old automobile, or wear straight front dresses—or anything."

The man's eyes smiled up at her.

"The home range is good enough, eh?"

He drew her head gently downward till their lips met.



AN IMPERTINENT SPARROW

THIS morning to my window ledge
A little sparrow came,
And saucily he chirped to me
My dainty lady's name.

I chided him, "Thou hast no need
My lady's name to say,
Because my heart with every beat,
Doth throb it night and day."

GEORGE HORTON.

ON MONEY, CHECKS AND ROALTIES

By Charles Battell Loomis

Author of "At Mrs. Bidwell's Tea," "Cheerful Americans," Etc.

I ONCE knew a millionaire who always carried his money around with him in bills. There were some dollar bills, more ten-dollar bills, and many hundred and thousand-dollar bills. He always carried them in a suit case with an ordinary lock and key, and he told me that he was happy just because he had the actual money.

His brother hardly ever handled money at all. He was a millionaire, too, but he did all his business with checks and seldom had more than twenty dollars on his person, and he was miserable and dyspeptic.

I understood the feeling of the moneyed millionaire better than that of the checked one. The first man was not a miser; he was simply a grown-up child, with a child's delight in actually seeing the money that he had earned by the sweat of his brow, most of it at a dollar a day. Don't stop to figure out how many days he had worked, or I won't wait.

Now, of course, there are persons of imagination who can go through life using checks and feeling rich, but it takes a good deal of imagination to do so, and for me the pretty green ten-dollar bill means ten times as much as the check for ten dollars.

Of course, checks have their uses, and I use them myself. When a bill for some prosaic thing, like repairs to the coal chute, comes in I send out a check in payment, but if I am buying a book that I have long coveted, you may be sure that I hand out real money for it.

The book represents something tangible, and I will not insult the book dealer by sending him a cold, unfeeling check.

If I wanted to bring happiness to a widow whose husband had died leaving her destitute, do you think that I would send her a check for a thousand dollars? If you do, you don't know me.

If I were going to do the thing at all, I would go to her house with one thousand crisp dollar bills, and I would receive her thanks for each one. But it is a queer thing about gratitude. Her thanks for the first bill would be heartfelt, but by the time I had reached the first hundred she would have grown tired of thanking me, and I verily believe that before I had handed in the last bill she would have asked me if I couldn't be a little more expeditious. Thus usage dulls the senses.

On the other hand, do you suppose that if I were sued for a thousand dollars I would pay the complainant in good green money? No, a thousand times no. I would purposely buy the smallest blank check that I could find, and in my most minute chirography, and with an autograph that was barely good, I would sign it, and thus I would feel that I was getting off cheap.

In some things most of us are intensely mean, and among the expenditures that offend men's souls are those paid into a railroad company's grasping maw. I hold myself no better than the rest, and, if possible, I always travel in company with another, and before we start out I give him money to cover

the expenses, and then he buys the tickets and I feel that I have not spent so much.

But in buying stationery, and books, and pictures, I never think of intrusting the business to another. Let me pick out my own paper, find my own book, be my own judge of the picture, and, when they are ready to deliver, let me pay the bill myself in coin of the realm.

Your plumber should always receive a check, but the man who entertains you should get good gold, even if it is only fifty cents' worth.

One objection I have to royalties is that they always come in the form of a check—when they come at all. One time, though, my publisher varied it; instead of sending a check he sent a bill. You see I had given at least ten copies of the book at Christmas time, and, of course, the balance was in his favor. Do you know, I really enjoyed the thing for a change.

By the way, that receiving of royalties, even if they are paid in check form, is a very good game. You sell your stories for so much, and then, when they are all printed, you are induced to make a book of them. Well, you have already been paid for them, so that you stand to gain, whatever happens. It may be only ten dollars that will come to you, but it may be ten thousand, and the joy of looking forward to royalty day is one that cannot be expressed in words. You do not hear much about the sale of your book; your friends say nothing about it, but perhaps they are keeping its phenomenal success a secret from you. You live in the country, and you never see the *Bookman*, so you do not know what the six best sellers are, but you have your suspicions. At last the fateful day arrives, the familiar envelope of your publisher comes to you by mail, and as you open it a check flutters out. You remember the stories of du Maurier and "Trilby," and how

his publishers sent him several thousands over and above the contract agreement.

To be sure, it is only a check, and not money, but, after all, any bank will convert a check into money if you are known, and your book has doubtless made you known through the wide world.

You pick up the check and close your eyes, until you are holding it right in front of them. "The Second National Bank of New York. Pay to the order of yourself \$47.50. Harp, Scrib & Co."

It isn't quite what you thought it would be. The book is not one of the six—yet. Still, after the first disappointment is over, you reflect that it is all clear gain, and you go to the bank and have it converted into new dollar bills, and then you go down to the book store and you buy thirty odd books that you have wanted for years.

No, you don't. You know very well you don't, for the same mail that brought the check brought its antithesis in the form of a bill from the gentleman who raised the price of beef on you, and the other gentleman who charged you eight dollars a ton for coal, and like a good little man you sit down and you write out two checks which take up forty-two of the dollars.

But take my advice, and get the better of fortune by taking the five fifty that is left—and your wife—and going into town for a jamboree. Remember that a jamboree, small though it be, remains in the memory long after the memory of a paid bill has left you.

Pay the bills, but save enough out of the cost of your clothes for a little jamboree. Clothes warm the body, but jamborees warm the cockles of the heart, and a man who neglects the cockles of the heart to put Jaeger underwear on his lusty limbs has failed in his duty toward himself—and his better half.



A JOINT CONFESSION

By John Swain

“HARRY,” said Anne, “do you suppose we have really told each other everything?”

The minister had finished with us, and we had escaped through the servants’ entrance and away from the crowd without much rice or white ribbon and no old boots at all. (You see, we are both smart that way.) We were in the carriage and had just got nicely settled back into the cushions when Anne made her remark—with the air of having had it saved up some time for that particular occasion.

“Everything,” I affirmed at once, settling just a little more. And then, as a horrible suspicion crossed my mind, I decided that perhaps there was something to be looked into.

“At least on my part,” I added. “Have you?”

“Dearie! Of course I have. Now don’t, Harry. People can see right in the window—well, pull the blind down, then. But I think the driver can hear.

“You know, Harry, if there should be anything, and I should find it out, ever, I’d be—well, I’d feel dreadfully, unless you told me right now.”

“You know the worst,” I said, half tragically. And then there was borne across my masculine intellect the idea that Anne had something to confess and was only waiting a start. Anne has a way like that. I fancy she thinks that if I will own up to a very little fault first she can hold that up as a reason why I should forgive her own. I played to that inspiration.

“Of course,” said I. “I have told you everything important, but I couldn’t tell you all my past history. (Just one more, please, dearie. Well, those two

were one just like us. They came so close together.) I can’t think of anything that would make you feel bad, but—now I do remember just one thing I never told you. But I don’t want to tell it now.”

“Oh, *please* do, Harry.”

“No, not on this ride. Besides, it is too long. We are almost at the station, and I must have at least one kiss.”

We were going down to Palm Beach in her father’s car, the *Nereid*, and were to have it all to ourselves, except just for Charlie and Corinne, the servants. So we dropped the matter then, and didn’t take it up till we were well away from Chicago. We went out of the city attached to an evening train on the Big Four road, and we ate dinner very properly, and behaved ourselves quite like old married folks until we were below Kankakee. But when we had returned to our little library Anne was right at me again to “Fess up.” There was much argumentation and deliberation before we found that each of us had something to tell—just one thing, of course, and we traded promises to tell them together.

“I know, Harry,” said Anne. “Let’s write them. Then we can read them at the same time, and we can’t either of us back out after the other has told.”

That seemed to me a good idea. So with our train pounding across Illinois and Indiana farms at a great clip we sat at opposite sides of father-in-law’s writing table, and wrote them out. Not without interruption, you know; but Anne was so afraid I’d peek that every time I jumped up to kiss her she came and met me halfway. The confessions were done at last, however, and we

traded and sat back in our chairs to read them.

Anne's began just like a letter. "Dearest Harry," it said, "do you remember the second time you proposed to me?"

"Of course I do," I said, right out aloud. "Why, Anne, that was—why I remember every one of them. Why, what happened that time?"

"Don't bother me," Anne exclaimed. She was biting her lip as she read, and drawing little short breaths, and I could see she was getting very interested in something. She had just read where I said "It was the time I proposed on April Fool's," evidently, for she said :

"Oh, Harry, were you engaged to some other girl, then, as you were at first? If you were—if it was that Katie Miller I'll never forgive you."

But I was too busy to reply, and we didn't either of us say anything again till we had finished, though Anne giggled and gasped several times, and perhaps I did, too. So I'll just write them both off from memory, mine first, and you can see what a surprise was in them for both of us.

"Dearie," I said, "this isn't so very terrible, you know. It was that time I proposed to you on April Fool's. I didn't remember what night it was, truly, and I had been in love with you an awfully long time. And you came down that night with that funny flumadiddle waist on—the one that always looks as if you had sort of wound yourself into it—that cream colored thing, you know. You had pink roses in your hair that looked simply beautiful in the brown, and I couldn't help it. Nobody could.

"You looked at me so funny. I thought at first you were angry. And then you said that your brother had caught that queer sea gull, with a red neck, that you called a crimson-throated tern, and that its broken leg had got well and you had turned it loose that day to fly north for the summer. You said that a girl's heart was just as wild as a sea gull and would be taken prisoner just as readily. Do you remember? I had never heard you say anything poetic like that before—just as if you had taken it out of a play. And you said, 'When you have caught the crimson-throated tern I will believe that perhaps you can win a girl's heart.' Do you remember how tragic you were as you said it?

"I was terribly disappointed, for I thought you were too sensible to send me out on such a foolish chase. I didn't think you

would do it if you cared for me at all. I tried to persuade myself not to go, but I was so much in love with you that I was bound to take every chance to win you. So after the bird I went.

"I knew the gulls went north for the summer, so I bought a canoe and a gun and went up on my yacht along the shore. I would have the *Serenade* sail along a few miles and then I would go out in the canoe and paddle around and flush all the gulls in sight and as they arose I'd watch for one with a crimson throat.

"But I couldn't find him. I went down Green Bay and over to Mackinac. I knew I was hunting a needle in a haystack, but I thought perhaps good luck would come my way. I went up the Sault and over to the north shore of Superior. I had given up hoping to find the bird by that time, but I couldn't bear to go back to Chicago. If I couldn't have you I wanted to be away out of civilization. So in July I took my canoe over the divide from Michipicoten, going up through Wawa Lake, Hawk Lake, Manitowish and Missanabie lakes to Moose River and down to Hudson's Bay. Of course I still hunted for the gull, but I had no hope.

"You came up to Michipicoten that summer. Do you remember? Well, when I came back through the gold camp at Wawa I heard that you were over at the harbor at the Algoma Inn. I was in despair. They told me—I met a Chicago party there—that young Halford had followed you up and was with you constantly. I didn't know what to do, but at last I had an inspiration. I went down to the mouth of Michipicoten River and shot a sea gull—just a plain, ordinary old sea gull that maybe never was ten miles from the Mission in his life. Then I went up to the Hudson Bay Company's post there and borrowed a bottle of red ink from Mr. MacDonald, the factor, and painted the old thing.

"Sweetheart, I hated to deceive you. In fact, I didn't mean to. I had sworn not to come back to you without a red-necked gull. I couldn't find one, so I made one. I stained the neck of that one crimson and then I went out into the woods and tore my clothes some more, and then I ran at a good fast trot all that six miles of ragged trail from the Old Mission around to the harbor.

"I tell you, dearie, when I came straggling, triumphant, gull in hand, up to the hotel piazza I had to pretend awfully hard to be surprised to find you there.

"So that is all, dearest. I knew you didn't care a hang which gull you had—you only wanted to test me by giving me the task. Sometimes, forgive me, I thought you did it to get rid of me. But the way you flew to meet me, right before Halford, shamed that idea out of my mind for good and all. That's all, sweetheart. And when you have read this far say 'Done' and I'll come around the table and kiss you."

That was what Anne was reading as

our train rumbled along. Over opposite to her I was getting what pleasure I might out of this:

"DEAREST HARRY: Dear old boy. I have a perfectly dreadful, *dreadful* thing to tell you. I almost wish I hadn't started to tell. But I must. Well, then, it was the second time you proposed to me. Do you remember it? I don't suppose your masculine mind will recall such trivial circumstances, so I'll remind you that it was on April Fool's night. You were going to take me to Flossie Gilman's April Fool party. I don't suppose it has ever occurred to you that you went away that night without mentioning the fact? And that you never have since?

"Now that it's all over I don't mind confessing to you that I was very much offended on account of your behavior with Katie Miller. You had proposed to me just two months before, and the mere fact that I had refused you then gave you no right whatever to act up with other girls and Katie knew it perfectly well. And besides you had no business to propose on April Fool's night. I put on my very best duds just to fascinate you, and incidentally to please Mr. Halford, who was just at the popping point. And then the first thing you said, right offhand, brutally, without the slightest regard for my feelings, was, 'Anne, I love you; will you marry me?' Hurled it at me all in one breath, with no sentiment or anything. You foolish boy! I don't see how you ever got accepted at all. Mr. Halford never made such an inartistic beginning. It never occurred to me to believe that you were serious. I had been fooling people all day long, and I thought you had chosen a jest which was in very bad taste, with which to greet me. I waited to hear you say April Fool, but you didn't say it. And then I determined to play an April Fool trick of my own, so I sent you after that bird—not expecting you to go.

"You never even stopped to explain to Flossie why we didn't come to her party, and Mr. Halford missed that chance of seeing me in my best finery.

"I was terribly worried about you, Harry. I cried myself almost sick. I used to go down to McDonald's for papers from Milwaukee and Racine, and Green Bay and Sault Ste. Marie, and kept my room fairly littered with them, watching to see if your yacht was mentioned anywhere. And when I read that you had left the *Scena* at Michipicoten and had gone to Hudson's Bay I couldn't stand it any longer, but started after you. I was so afraid you'd get lost. I made mamma

fairly dizzy getting away from Chicago, and mystified her completely because I insisted on going up to the Sault by a foot-train instead of on the *Manitou*. Mamma does not consider it quite respectable to go up any other way than on the *Manitou*.

"Dearie! Can you imagine the days and weeks of waiting at the harbor for news of you? I fairly pestered the souls out of the guides and the Indians who came out of the woods, for news of you, and to mother's horror I went away back to Missanabie myself, to get news quicker. But when I heard from a guide who came up that you would be along in a couple of days I was ashamed for you to see me there and I made the guide and Mr. Halford take me back to Michipicoten posthaste.

"Oh, Harry, I suffered so, that you really will forgive me. You will, won't you? When you came down the last rocks on the trail and over to the hotel veranda all ragged and forlorn—but triumphant, Harry, with that big sea gull in your hand—I just had to run to you. But, Harry, I must 'fess up. That wasn't the right bird at all. You made a mistake. I never dared tell you then, I wanted to be safely married to you first. But, Harry, it was not the right bird. Because—well, because, dearie, there wasn't any right one. I was just playing an April Fool joke on you, and there never was any crimson-throated tern at all, that I know of, till you brought that one in. I just read about them in a book. If you had said April Fool about the proposal I would have said it about the bird. When you came Mr. Halford was just going to propose again, and I felt so horrid, and I couldn't help running right to you in front of him, I guess he knew then whom I cared for. I'm so glad you got the right kind of a bird and could bring it back to me. It was the dearest thing you ever did, and I have told it to myself over and over again, just to prove—though it doesn't need proving—that my husband—there, now, that's the *first time* I have written that to you—my husband never gives up, but will go to the end of the world and get the very thing he set out to get. And now come around to my side of the table and—tell me you forgive me."

And so I did, and do. But we both felt a trifle remorseful, I guess, when we got the paper from home with a column account of the romance that had its origin in the successful hunt for a missing sea gull, which I pursued and captured at the peril of my life.

BRIDGE

By J. R. Crawford

BRIDGE marks a distinct advance in the progress of civilization. At least, the theory of it does. In theory, it is a game of silence. It is this feature of it that is a sign of progress. We have had other silent games, but with a difference. In Bridge you lose your partner's money while he looks on and writhes impotently.

It is this that constitutes the difference. If you should by chance speak, you at once give him his opportunity. When the post-mortem comes you will discover it was all your fault. Hence the need for silence. In other games, if you give way to idle chatter, you involve only yourself in ruin.

Bridge is another link in evolution. It is a transition from light conversation to mental telepathy. A sort of bridge between the two, as it were. The need for conversation grows less every day. The average nerves are unable to withstand the wear and tear of the average conversation. Hence nature must protect herself. Mental telepathy has been decreed the solution of the problem.

Bridge is merely the means to an end. Like everything else, it is a tool of evolution. Nature is cunning. In no other occupation is the desire for mental telepathy as great as in Bridge. Especially when your partner is playing your hand. What the race desires, it always obtains. Otherwise there could be no progress. Evolution is due to a realization of our own defects. Therefore, mental telepathy is certain to be evolved from Bridge.

It has other advantages. Its superiority to ping-pong need not be dwelt

upon. It is too obvious. Some one defined a bore as a person who is obvious. A bore tells all he knows, whereas a clever man will pretend he knows what he doesn't. The former founds empires, the latter religions. After all, the difference is not so marked. This has nothing to do with Bridge. Bridge appeals to the intellect of those who have no other employment for their brains. It is considered skillful, and any one can play it. This accounts for its popularity. Every fad which causes the stupid to believe themselves clever is a success. Even our fads must flatter us. Golf does not. Its vogue is over. Automobiles and Bridge have supplanted it. If you own an automobile fast enough and heavy enough—a lack of skill need not worry you. They are so well armored in these days that it is seldom they can be damaged. Besides, you can always hire chauffeurs to run them. Automobiles merely require money. The same is true of Bridge. If you have plenty of money—skill is immaterial.

This brings us to another of its great advantages. It enables the class whom thinking wearies, to get rid of money without fatigue. This is a crying necessity of modern life. And your partner shares your losses. It is based on correct principles of modern commercial combination. It has but one real objection—he also shares your gains. It is said that an Irish philosopher is now seeking to remedy this last defect. Then its perfection will be unquestioned. As it stands, it fills a place in civilization which nothing else can.



FOR BOOK LOVERS

“THE Call of the Wild,” which the Macmillan Company publishes, is a wonderful story; a really grand story of a noble dog, its sire a great Saint Bernard, its mother a Scotch shepherd, their offspring Buck, a hero, a leader greater than most men in the possession of qualities that go to make a leader.

Buck is born to great adventure, to life filled with experience, as it is with suffering, which he meets with magnificent endurance, pluck, dauntless spirit and politic brain.

The splendid beast is stolen from a beautiful home, and then learns his first lesson at the hands of a brute, who clubs him into submission after a terrible fight—for this dog can fight like a lion. This is what he learns:

“He was beaten (he knew that) but he was not broken. He saw once for all, that he stood no chance against a man with a club. He had learned the lesson, and in all his after life he never forgot it. The club was a revelation. It was his introduction to the reign of primitive law, and he met the introduction halfway. The facts of life took on a fiercer aspect, and while he faced the aspect uncowed, he faced it with all the latent cunning of his nature aroused.”

Buck is taken to the Klondike, where he draws heavy sledges under the whip and learns the law of club and fang. He loses refinement, but gains strength. He kills a dog in a terrific fight and becomes a master among the other dogs, winning the respect and admiration of his Canadian drivers.

Then a great love comes in his life for a new master who rescues him from death, and finally, when this man dies, slain by Indians, Buck trails them, charges upon them and kills them like a dog fiend drunk with the blood of vengeance. After that he becomes master of a wolf pack and carries on a fierce

feud against the Yeehats, who had killed John Thornton.

“Thornton had a way of taking Buck's head roughly between his hands and resting his own head upon Buck's, of shaking him back and forth, the while calling him ill names that to Buck were love names. Buck knew no greater joy than this rough embrace and the sound of murmured oaths, and at each jerk back and forth it seemed that his heart would be shaken out of his body, so great was its ecstasy. And when released he sprang to his feet, his mouth laughing, his eyes eloquent, his throat vibrant with unuttered sound and in that fashion remained without movement, John Thornton would reverently exclaim, ‘God! You can all but speak!’

“Buck had a trick of love expression that was akin to hurt. He would often seize Thornton's hand in his mouth and close so fiercely that the flesh bore the impress of his teeth for some time afterward. And as Buck understood the oaths to be love words, so the man understood the feigned bite for a caress.

“For a long time after his rescue, Buck did not like Thornton to get out of his sight. From the moment he left the tent to the time he entered it again, Buck would follow at his heels. His transient masters, since he had left the Northland, had bred in him a fear that no master could be permanent. He was afraid that Thornton would pass out of his life as Perrault and François and the Scotch half-breed had passed out. Even in the night, in his dreams, he was haunted by this fear. At such times he would shake off sleep and creep through the chill to the flap of the tent, where he would stand and listen to the sound of his master's breathing.”



“The Mummer's Wife,” Brentano, publisher, is one of George Moore's vivisections of life and personality as it is formed from environment, which, this author preaches, is what really makes character, rather than that character creates circumstance.

The study of dipsomania in this volume, the victim being a woman, is a

fitting companion piece to Hichen's lady morphiac in "Felix." It is, however, not lightened by Hichen's touch of idealism. This is Moore at his best, or at his worst, in all the brutalism of revolting detail—English Zolaism—gutter-reeking, sewer-fed.

The hopeless misery of vice, the gradual degeneration of the Mummer's Wife, is told in copious chapters that read like a Doré's Hell put into words.

The actor—an English actor—is a combination of animalism, vanity and good nature that appeals strongly to the women in the Moore book, but will never do for those outside its pages. George Moore is always interesting as a student of sex, but he strips his people of the last shred of spirituality and presents them as creatures ruled by their lowest impulses.

Otherwise he makes them dreary, psalm-singing nonentities, and suggests unmistakably that aspiration is only a morbid form of eroticism. Moore is like a great artist who chooses to paint mud heaps, a master musician who tunes his talent to ignoble melodies.



"The Grey Cloak," by Harold McGrath, Bobbs, Merrill, publishers, is a swashbuckling tale that in its speeches recalls Hackett, Faversham and a tribe of such stage heroes.

"Out of the way, then, curse you!" remarks the hero, who was very hot stuff, as will be seen by this:

"Back he pressed the old man, back, back into the corridor, toward the stairs. They could scarcely see each other, and it was by instinct alone that thrust was met by parry. Up the rear staircase came a dozen mercenaries, bearing torches. The glare smote the master in the eyes and nearly dazzled him."

"'You?'

"There was a gurgling sound, a coughing, and the leader sank to his knees, rolled upon his side and became still. The man in the grey cloak, holding the mask to his face, rushed down the grand staircase, sweeping aside all those who barred his path.

"He seemed possessed with strength and courage Homeric; odds were nothing. With a back-hand swing of his arm he broke one head; he smashed a face with the pommel; caught another by the throat and flung him headlong. Down the steps he dashed, through the gate, thence into the street, a mob yelling at his heels. The light from the torches splashed him. A sharp gust of wind nearly tore the mask from his fingers. As he caught it, he ran full into a priest.

"'Out of the way, then, curse you!'"



Morgan Robertson's "Sinful Peck," sent out by Harper's, is a story of the sea, showing in its making the author's perfect technical knowledge of ships and their sailors. A party of men are taken off on a voyage to Singapore on a bet and have some sizzling adventures on the way.

Some of the pages are so filled with sea-talk, tautened rigging, slackened halyards and topgallants, that they give a mere landlubber the fan tods just to see the wet language in print.

The sailors were a crowd that feared neither man, God nor the devil, although they did fear a gun. One might judge this by the names in the roll-call—Bigpig Monahan, Seldom Howard, Tosser Galvin, Poopdeck Cahill, Ghost O'Brien, Yampaw Gallegher, Turkey Twain, Sorry Welch, Shiner O'Toole, Jump Black and Moccassey Gill.



A dreamer and one that lives in a dream is Pauline, the heroine of "A Modern Obstacle," Alice Duer Miller's book, published by the Scribners.

"I don't know why it is," she remarks; "that being tolerably calm myself, I am thrown with such violent intimates. Louisa is at times extremely coarse, Michael is as a sword and you are always so brutal!"

"You mean," returned her visitor, "that we don't all go tip-toeing about in the same beautiful mist that you do!"

Pauline's mist is a poetic one, but the mist in which the other people of the

story live is the money mist—which is the Modern Obstacle.

There is an almost Gilbertian spirit in the theme of a man with sixty thousand dollars deciding to marry an extravagant girl and commit suicide after a six months' honeymoon when all the money has been spent.

And the grim joke that Fate plays upon them! They compromise on a separation. He goes to South America and makes a fortune. She starts to join him joyfully. The great golden obstacle has been removed. A letter brings her the news of his death from Yellow Fever!



More of poetry than power is another animal story, "The Kindred of the Wild," by Charles G. D. Roberts, Page & Company, Boston. This is a jungle book, and puts you at once in sympathy with the great ones of the woods and the air.

The four-footed beasts that we have grown to know as man-hunting, man-eating things are invested by this author with sympathies and feelings that rend them in their times of joy and suffering very much as the human animal is rent.

So much heart is Mr. Roberts able to put into the personalities of his forest friends that one could imagine him writing a capital story of a shark which would cause you to weep for Mrs. Shark and the little sharklets when the harpoon entered their papa's back.

You are closer to the animal kingdom as you read than to your own kind, and you grow to hate the hunter with his gun except when the author cleverly idealizes the killing, as in the story, "The Watchers of the Camp Fire," where the woodsman, in shooting the big panther, saves the life of the doe.

There are splendid illustrations throughout the book by Charles Livingstone Bull, who is thoroughly and artistically in tune with the writer's moods. "The Animal Story," an introductory chapter, gives you a glimpse of the poetic animal psychology which Mr.

Roberts evidently believes in most truly.

"In Panoply of Spears," the story of a fretful porcupine, sets us in the bosom of this animal's family. We learn of his love, his marriage, his fatherhood, his bereavement and final retirement to solitary life, leaving his wife bereft of her two spiky darlings at one blow.

"The Lord of the Air" shows us the pride and the kingship of an eagle, who, caught in a trap, escapes after a glorious fight and resumes his throne among the winds of Sugar Loaf Mountain.



A lively story of an American girl touring Europe in a motor car with an English swell masquerading as her *chauffeur* is "The Lightning Conductor," C. N. and A. M. Williamson the authors, Henry Holt & Company the publishers.

The narrative is entertainingly told in letters. Oh, these literary letters such as no one writes except for publication! Miss Molly, the heroine, writes to her father, and there are other letters, all impossibly entertaining; but nevertheless entertaining, between the characters in the story, which teems with action, as fits an automobile story, until the reader, who may be a duffer, becomes quite familiar with the inner workings of the fashionable devil wagon.

The Englishman, who is a ripping good sort of a fellow, is, of course, in love with the girl, which is the reason for his somewhat remarkable performance in posing as a servant and putting up with the snubs and slights that come to him in this guise of the Lightning Conductor, which name the girl gives him.

Everything ends happily. In books these things always turn out well. To have run the machine over a ditch with the whole party would have been a striking climax, but wedding bells are prettier. The book, by the way, besides being charmingly entertaining, is a capital guide to the automobile faddists who contemplate this mode of seeing Europe. The routes and roads are de-

scribed, evidently, by one who has actually traveled those paths.



Anthony Hope and his adorable Dolly have been the cause of precipitating much conversational literature of the He and She style. In England, even more than America, authors are fond of endeavoring to emulate the delightful Carter and Lady Mickleham in their exquisite flirtation.

"Ethel," by J. J. Bell, the author of that canny little volume, "Wee MacGregor," both of the books published by Harper's, is a collection of dialogues between Ethel and Hugh, two engaged young persons, who, like all others in that blissful pre-nuptial state, are inane to a startling degree.

These two youngsters, bred on the *London Punch*, indulge in this sort of thing:

"I'll give you a riddle," says Hugh, who is something of a cut-up.

"All right; but I know it'll be something stupid," says Ethel.

"Thanks for kind encouragement. If a mussel were out for a walk and sprained its ankle how would it get home."

"But the mussel hasn't got an ankle."

"Indeed? You'll allow that an ankle has a muscle, therefore—"

"Oh, dear! But tell me the riddle again."

"If a mussel were out for a walk and sprained its ankle how would it get home?"

"Let me think. I know it's a catch."

"Certainly, seeing it deals with fish."

"Now don't put me off, Hugh. If a mussel were out for a walk—fancy a mussel being out for a walk—and sprained its ankle, how would it get home? Oh, I give it up!"

"Limpet!"

"Oh, limp it—yes, I see—limpet. H—m!"

This is a decidedly safe book for the young person. The courtship of Hugh and Ethel is absolutely purer than the celebrated baking powder.



A better view of youthful love making is to be had in "The Land of Joy," by Ralph Henry Barbour, Doubleday, Page & Company; a college story with the breeze of a football rush in its pages and sentiment so charmingly expressed that it makes the ordinary book love seem stupid.

But we have college life in Harvard as a beginning, with a bunch of bright, interesting, if not over-studious young men, keen on athletics and girls. But the little love scenes are more fascinatingly written than the football-practice chapters or the college whoops.

Philip is one of the boys. "Thoreau and Emerson didn't interest him greatly as yet, and being a very healthy young gentleman with a good digestion and a scant knowledge of such a thing as a liver, he never considered his soul at all."

Philip's sweetheart surprises him with a kiss when his eyes are shut "awfully tight." For one delicious awe-filled moment he sat silent, blind, and his heart ceased beating. Then his promises were all forgotten. He opened his eyes. He sprang to his feet with outstretched arms. "Betty!" he cried. Betty had flown.

"He stared in bewilderment, then dashed to the door. In the darkness at the top of the broad stairs he thought he saw the disappearing flutter of a white skirt."

"Betty!" he cried, imploringly.

There was a moment of silence. Then from above there came a low whisper:

"Good-night, Phil!"

"Betty! Come down!"

"Good-night!" said the whisper.

"Betty, I'm coming up!"

The whisper was alarmed.

"If you dare!" it protested.

Phil stood irresolute, one foot on the first step of the stairway that led to heaven.

"You mustn't, Phil," repeated the whisper.

"Good-night!"

"Betty!" he cried again.

"Good-night!" Angels, it seems are not always merciful.

"Well, when then, Betty?"

"Sunday?" asked the whisper.

"Oh!" he protested. "Two days!"

"Good-night, Phil!"

He sighed deeply.

"Good-night, Betty! Then—"

"Betty!"

"Yes?"

"I love you, Betty!"

There was a silence in heaven for a moment. Then a railing creaked, and

"Phil!"

"What, Betty?"

"I'm throwing you one!"

"Betty!"

"Good-night, Phil!"

"Good-night, Betty! God bless you, dear, dear Betty!"

Outside on the steps a snowflake settled softly on Philip's mouth. He gasped and plunged exultantly into the storm.

It was glorious weather.

James Lane Allen's "The Mettle of the Pasture," is a Macmillan Company book, and is written in a somewhat different style to the stories that we know best from this author's pen. He gets farther away from the fields and the forests, the flowers and the birds, and delves more in human hearts than in the earth as is his wont.

It is a sad little story, with man's folly and woman's weakness and pride as the notes of humanity that, deftly touched, produce life's harmonies and discords. Of the theme for which the author names his book is written:

"But this particular phrase—the mettle of the pasture—belongs rather to our century than to Shakespeare's; more to Darwin than to the theatre of that time. What most men are thinking of now, if they think at all, is of our earth, a small grass-grown planet hung in space. And, unaccountably making his appearance upon it, man, a pasturing animal deriving his mettle from his pasture. The old question comes newly up to us: Is anything ever added to him? Is anything ever lost to him? Evolution—is it anything more than change? Civilizations—are they anything but different arrangements of the elements of man's nature with reference to the pre-eminence of some elements and the subsidence of others?

"What is the mettle of the American? He has had new ideas, but has he developed a new virtue or carried any old virtue forward to characteristic development? Has he added to the civilizations of Europe the spectacle of a single virtue transcendently exercised? We are not braver than any other brave people, we are not more polite, we are not more honest or more truthful, or more sincere or kind. I wish to God that some virtue, say the virtue of truthfulness, could be known throughout the world as the unfailing mark of the American—the mettle of his pasture. Not to lie in business, not to lie in love, not to lie in religion—to be honest with one's fellowmen, with women, with God—suppose the rest of mankind would agree that this virtue constituted the characteristic of the American. That would be fame for ages!"



Who is Dwight Tilton? He has written a capital story, "On Satan's Mount," which Clark, of Boston, publishes. It is the story of the battle that constantly goes on in a man's life between principle and desire for the world's prizes that are oftener filched than won.

The hero is the decent fellow that women dream about and like to believe in, although they never really meet him. Philip Craig, a good name for a hero, shies at many of the "chances," as people call them, that come to him when his doing so would seem to mean his worldly ruin.

He's nothing of the goody-good, either, but he balks at the inhumanity of man to man in the mills of the business world that grind out souls and consciences, as well as hearts and bodies.

But nothing can stop Philip, and he goes on from the post of rich man's secretary, to journalism, where he speedily becomes a top liner and writes socialistic editorials that are printed in big type in thirty cities simultaneously. Whew!

He becomes a labor leader and something of an agitator, but he is admirably sincere, and when the proprietor of his paper suggests that he modify the tone of his writings with the purpose of catering to the interests of unscrupulous rich men, he throws up his job.

He goes on mightily, and finally lands in the President's chair through a fluke in politics, and even there, or, perhaps, more there than ever, he finds himself still assailed by that most "Satanic and insidious tempter—Power."

But he is splendidly consistent and true to his ideas of right. This book is healthily inspirited and carries its message to men's souls as clearly and beautifully as a bell-buoy at sea in the night.



Albert Morris Bagby, whom one always associates with musical mornings at the Waldorf, has written a charming story, "Miss Träumerei," the name of his heroine, a thoroughly nice girl.

The scene is laid in Weimar, Germany, the home of Franz Liszt, and in this book we get an intimate view of the great musician, the photographs of his home and his friends being reproduced as illustrations.

This is a musical romance, pervaded with the atmosphere of Germany, and the musicianly will welcome it among their books.